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The Atlantic Monthly

JULY 2000

How Al Gore
Learned to Love
the Jugular

An Acquired Taste

BY

JAMES FALLOWS

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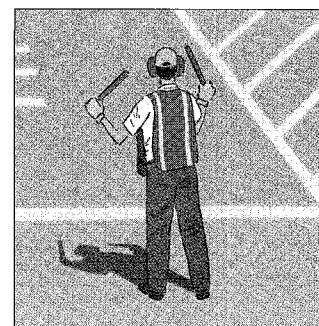




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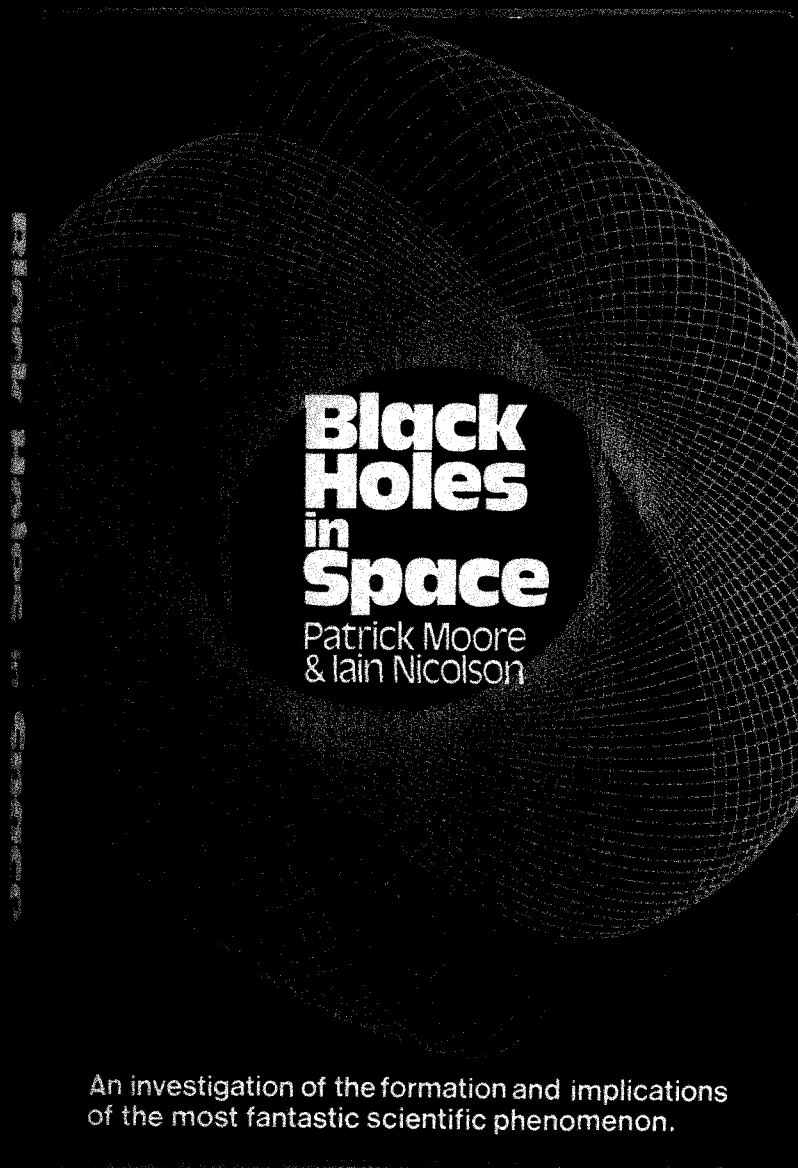
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July 1, 1980. Sucked from shelf, enters parallel dimension or something.



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AS even casual readers know, *The Atlantic Monthly* is not a heavily staff-written magazine. We depend for our sustenance on a loose-knit family of providers—reporters and essayists, novelists and poets. And as with all families, we take a certain pleasure in seeing our members receive recognition.

By any reckoning, 1999 was a good year for *Atlantic* fiction: a magazine that chooses its fiction carefully is glad to see its selections honored by the annual O. Henry and *Best American Short Stories* anthologies.

Each O. Henry collection (now published by Anchor Books/Random House) designates three prizewinners among the roughly twenty stories printed in the anthology. The O. Henry editor, Larry Dark, also names the magazine he feels has published the best fiction in the course of the year. *The Atlantic* is the winner for 2000, and two *Atlantic* stories—"The Man With the Lapdog," by Beth Lordan, and "The Deacon," by Mary Gordon—were the second- and third-prize winners, respectively. The O. Henry collection also includes Nathan Englander's "The Gilgul of Park Avenue."

The 2000 edition of *The Best American Short Stories*, edited by E. L. Doctorow and published by Houghton Mifflin, will likewise include the Englander story, along with Frances Sherwood's "Basil the Dog." Listed among its 100 "notable" stories

for 1999 are the Lordan and Gordon stories and "Sheep," by Thomas McNeely; "Closure and Roadkill on the Life's Highway," by William Gay; "Passengers," by Julie Schumacher; and "Assistance," by Roxana Robinson.

The annual *Best American Poetry* for 2000 will include four poems published in *The Atlantic* last year, by Billy Collins, Rodney Jones, Thomas Lux, and Susan Mitchell. The new *Best American Travel Writing* will include two articles by Jeffrey Tayler from *The Atlantic*. Sasha Abramsky won a James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism for his article "When They Get Out," about the delayed consequences of our increasingly tough prison policies—what happens when waves of convicts are released back into society.

Finally, Pulitzer Prizes were bestowed in April on three *Atlantic Monthly* contributors. The historian David M. Kennedy won the prize for history for his book *Freedom From Fear*, a portion of which was our cover story in March of last year. C. K. Williams won the poetry prize for his book *Repair*. And Thomas E. Ricks, now a reporter for *The Washington Post*, who has contributed three articles on military affairs to our pages, was a member of the *Wall Street Journal* team whose series on the post-Cold War armed forces won the Pulitzer for national reporting. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

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richard garriott

fantasy game designer/aspiring astronaut

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john lipinski

earthbound financial consultant

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LETTERS

Sound the Alar(m)

Mary Graham's statement "It was later agreed that the risk of cancer from Alar-sprayed apples was minimal" ("Regulation by Shaming," April *Atlantic*) is an example of how effective corporate disinformation can be. The Environmental Protection Agency does not casually classify a chemical as a carcinogen and ban it for all food uses, as it did Alar.

In food processing, Alar breaks down to a by-product called unsymmetrical dimethyl hydrazine, or UDMH. In 1985 the EPA concluded that Alar and UDMH might be causing as many as 100 cancers per million people exposed to it in their diet for a lifetime. That's 100 times the human health hazard considered acceptable by EPA standards. In 1990 the apple and chemical industries filed a libel lawsuit against those who had publicized Alar's dangers. The apple industry lost the lawsuit; the court concluded that the scientific case against Alar was sound. Nonetheless, the campaign of disinformation continues, because the chemical, agribusiness, and food industries were so scared.

In 1996 Elliot Negin wrote an article for the *Columbia Journalism Review* titled "The Alar 'Scare' Was for Real." Negin found that the facts had been misrepresented by a wide variety of news media, from *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *The Washington Post* to Knight-Ridder and the Newhouse News Service. (The American Council on Science and Health, incidentally, is largely funded by the chemical industry. Uniroyal, which manufactures Alar, is one of its funders. This council was the source for a misstatement by Jane Brody about Alar in *The New York Times* on August 18, 1998. The *Times* printed a correction on September 13, 1998.)

Thus Graham has plenty of company. It is ironic, though, that her error appeared in an article purporting to show that industry is more and more likely to confess the

truth voluntarily. You have to watch carefully when industry is shuffling those cards.

Olivia Eielson
Oakland, Calif.

In her article on shaming companies into mending their ways, Mary Graham states as a fact: "Many apples were sprayed with Alar, a growth regulator that contained small amounts of a carcinogen." If Graham can produce a published toxicology study proving that Alar did, indeed, contain a carcinogen in any amount, I would very much like to know that citation. If not, both author and editor owe an apology to your readers and to the unfortunate apple growers bankrupted by such statements.

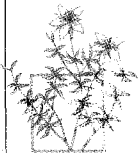
W. Grierson
Professor Emeritus
University of Florida
Winter Haven, Fla.

Mary Graham replies:

The Alar controversy, which obviously continues, illustrates the power that even fragmentary disclosure of information has to influence corporate actions. It does not illustrate the power of corporate disinformation, as Olivia Eielson suggests. Alar, widely used on apples as a growth regulator, was voluntarily removed from the market by its manufacturer in 1989, not because of any government action but because of a huge public outcry that followed a report on the television show *60 Minutes*. The show summarized a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council that concluded that a by-product of Alar was a carcinogen. The NRDC estimated that about one preschool child in 4,200 could get cancer if exposed to Alar before age seven. Apple sales plummeted, and some school districts removed apples from school lunch menus. Uniroyal, Alar's manufacturer, decided to take it off the market. The Environmental Protection Agency estimated at the time that the risk of cancer from Alar was one twenty-fifth as high as the NRDC reported, or about nine in a million. After further studies the EPA esti-

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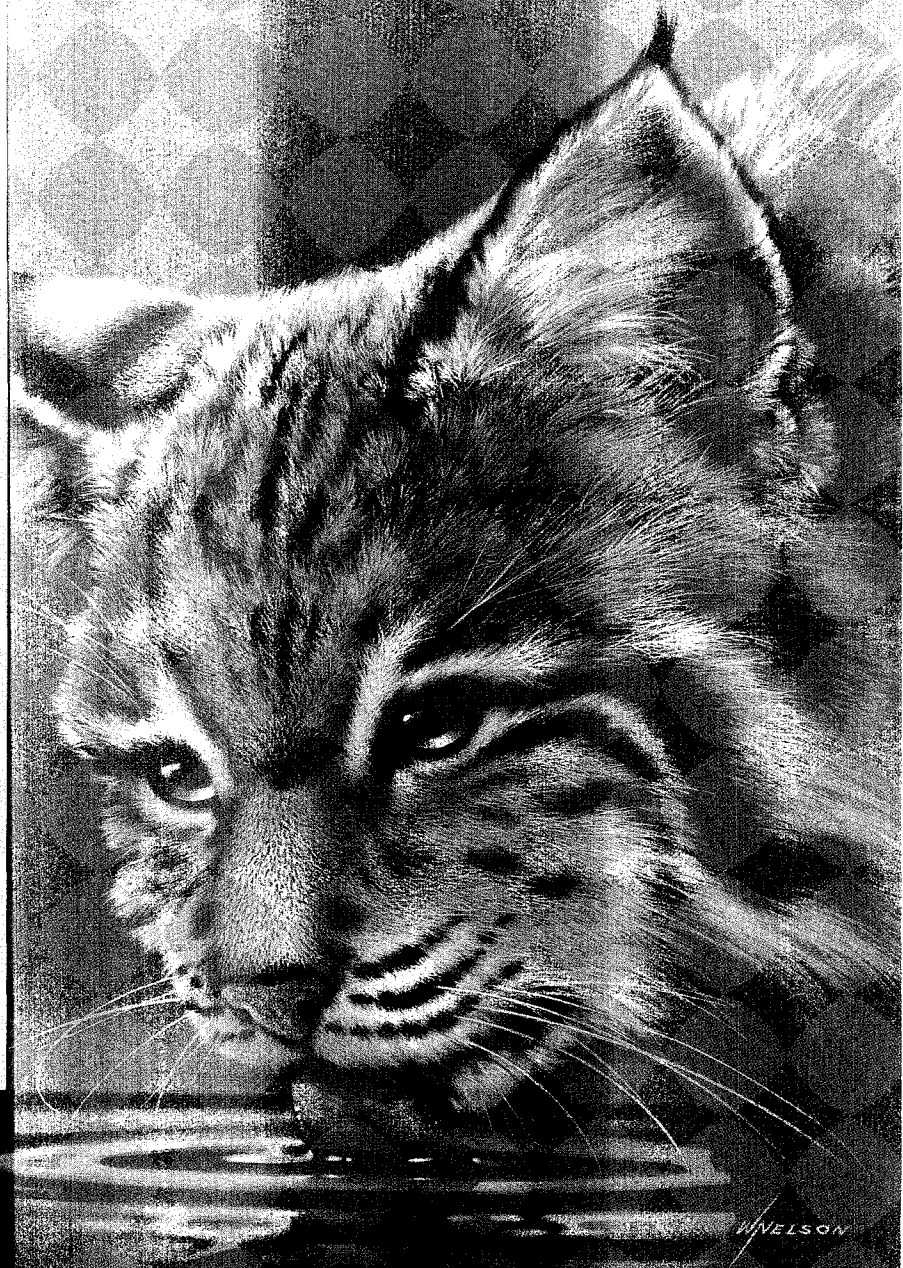
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mated that the risk was less than half that—about four in a million. Instead of stating that risks from the chemical were later found to be “minimal,” an imprecise term, perhaps I should have said that risks were later found to be much lower than originally estimated.

Catching War Criminals

Chuck Sudetic's article “The Reluctant Gendarme” (April *Atlantic*) is a stream of gratuitous rumors and accusations, founded on the jaded stereotype of an imaginary pro-Serb bias in the French military, and an outrage to France, which has lost seventy nationals in the service of peace in Bosnia. France was the second largest contributor to the NATO air strikes in Kosovo, and has sent 5,200 soldiers to one of the most difficult zones in Kosovo, where a number of them have been wounded as the price of their commitment to peace and their firm opposition to extremists on both sides.

The accusations are pure nonsense, both technically and politically—technically because decisions to arrest war criminals are the responsibility of the SFOR commander and SACEUR, and policy does not change according to sectors or according to the various SFOR contingents; politically because the French authorities at the highest levels have repeatedly emphasized their firm resolve to ensure that presumed war criminals are tried by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Contrary to Sudetic's allegations, French forces are actively contributing to the arrest of presumed war criminals. They have so far arrested six wanted criminals—not two, as stated in the article. On April 3 French troops arrested Momcilo Krajisnik, “the highest-ranking person indicted for war crimes” apprehended so far in Bosnia, according to NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson. French President Jacques Chirac, speaking during a recent visit to ICTY headquarters in The Hague, once again reaffirmed France's determination to help arrest wanted individuals, particularly Radovan Karadzic. As for Kosovo, an exemplary investigation led by French gendarmes resulted in the first arrest of alleged war criminals by the allies.

Contrary to what Sudetic implies, both the present and former chief prosecutors of the tribunal, Carla Del Ponte and Louise Arbou, have publicly expressed satisfac-

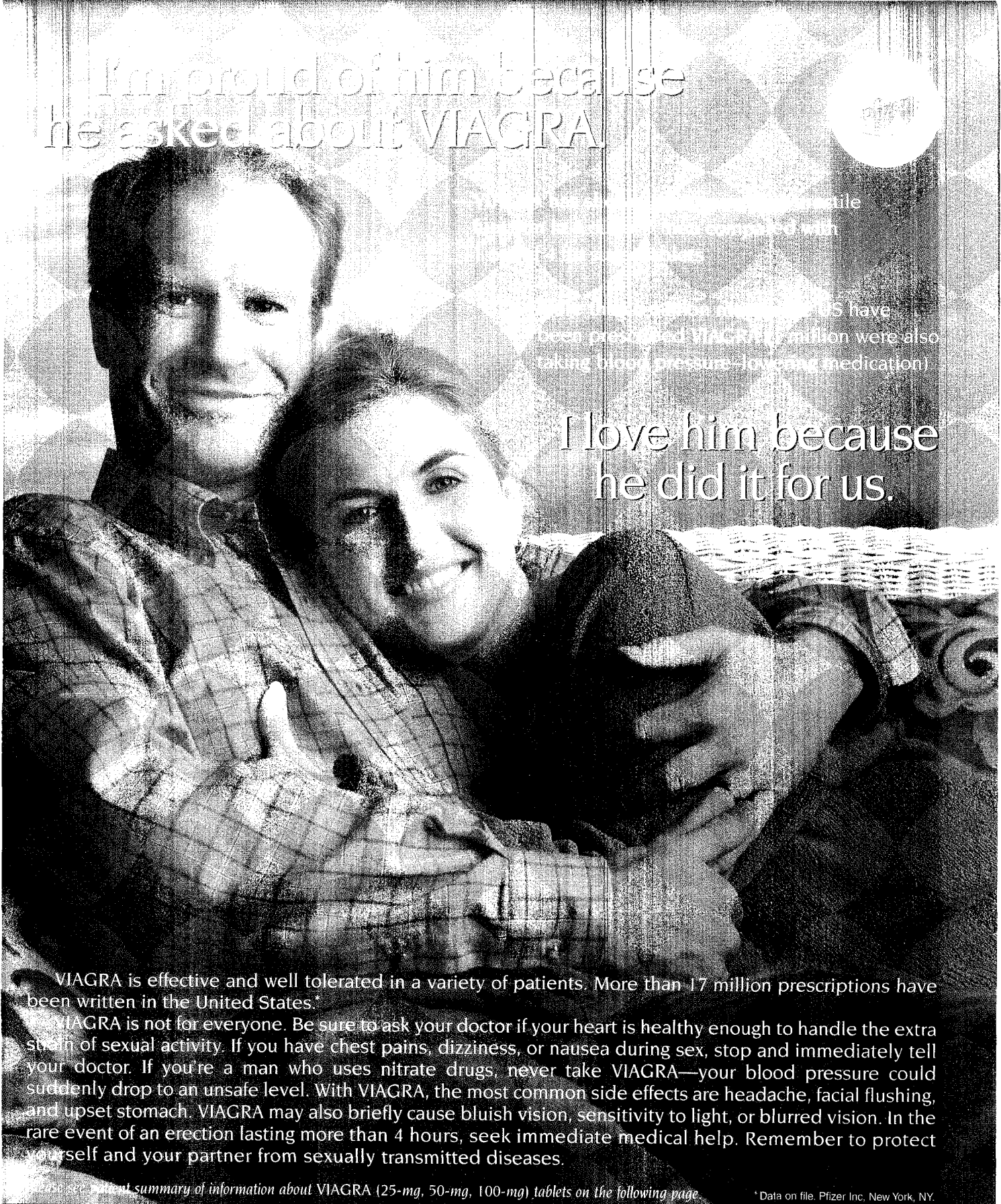
tion with the excellent working relationship between France and the ICTY.

François Delattre
Director, Press and Communication Office
Embassy of France
Washington, D.C.

Chuck Sudetic replies:

François Delattre skips over more than a few facts when he erroneously claims that the French army has arrested six Bosnians indicted for war crimes. Here's a list of everyone taken into custody in the French sector of Bosnia to date: The first was Dragoljub Kunarac. He surrendered voluntarily on March 4, 1998. I did not tally this action as a French arrest because, according to my sources at NATO and elsewhere, the French army declined to take him in before clearing it with the Bosnian Serb police and political leadership. The next two arrests claimed by the French were of Milorad Kmojelac (June 15, 1998) and Radomir Kovac (August 2, 1999). These men were taken in by German special forces in operations in which the French played only peripheral roles. My NATO sources say that after Kovac's arrest French soldiers angrily went to the Germans and told them to stop showing them up. “The Reluctant Gendarme” correctly credits the French army with the next two arrests—the only ones carried out before the article's publication deadline. The first Serb the French arrested was Zoran Vukovic (December 23, 1999); the operation took place a week after the French government found out that *The Atlantic* had embarrassing information about what was fueling the anger within NATO over Paris's reluctance to arrest war criminals. The next French arrest was of Mitar Vasiljevic (January 25, 2000); it was counterproductive, because it tipped off one of Bosnia's most notorious killers, Milan Lukic, to the fact that he had been indicted. Lukic hasn't been heard from since. Finally, the arrest of Momcilo Krajisnik (April 3, 2000)—which signaled a radical change in French policy—came several weeks after “The Reluctant Gendarme” was published. Journalists covering the Krajisnik arrest asked officials of the United Nations war-crimes tribunal in The Hague why Paris had changed its attitude. The officials handed them photocopies of “The Reluctant Gendarme,” smiled, and said the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, had held a frank discussion with President Jacques Chirac.

As for the pro-Serb bias among French army officers, which dates back to World



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This medicine can help many men when it is used as prescribed by their doctors. However, VIAGRA is not for everyone. It is intended for use only by men who have a condition called erectile dysfunction.

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When a man is sexually excited, the penis rapidly fills with more blood than usual. The penis then expands and hardens. This is called an erection. After the man is done having sex, this extra blood flows out of the penis back into the body. The erection goes away. If an erection lasts for a long time (more than 6 hours), it can permanently damage your penis. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have a prolonged erection that lasts more than 4 hours.

Some conditions and medicines interfere with this natural erection process. The penis cannot fill with enough blood. The man cannot have an erection. This is called erectile dysfunction if it becomes a frequent problem.

During sex, your heart works harder. Therefore sexual activity may not be advisable for people who have heart problems. Before you start any treatment for erectile dysfunction, ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex. If you have chest pains, dizziness or nausea during sex, stop having sex and immediately tell your doctor you have had this problem.

How VIAGRA Works

VIAGRA enables many men with erectile dysfunction to respond to sexual stimulation. When a man is sexually excited, VIAGRA helps the penis fill with enough blood to cause an erection. After sex is over, the erection goes away.

VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone

As noted above (*How Sex Affects the Body*), ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough for sexual activity.

If you take any medicines that contain nitrates—either regularly or as needed—you should never take VIAGRA. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine or recreational drug containing nitrates, your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe level. You could get dizzy, faint, or even have a heart attack or stroke. Nitrates are found in many prescription medicines that are used to treat angina (chest pain due to heart disease) such as:

- nitroglycerin (sprays, ointments, skin patches or pastes, and tablets that are swallowed or dissolved in the mouth)
- isosorbide mononitrate and isosorbide dinitrate (tablets that are swallowed, chewed, or dissolved in the mouth)

Nitrates are also found in recreational drugs such as amyl nitrate or nitrite ("poppers"). If you are not sure if any of your medicines contain nitrates, or if you do not understand what nitrates are, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

VIAGRA is only for patients with erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA is not for newborns, children, or women. Do not let anyone else take your VIAGRA. VIAGRA must be used only under a doctor's supervision.

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- VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

What To Tell Your Doctor Before You Begin VIAGRA

Only your doctor can decide if VIAGRA is right for you. VIAGRA can cause mild, temporary lowering of your blood pressure. You will need to have a thorough medical exam to diagnose your erectile dysfunction and to find out if you can safely take VIAGRA alone or with your other medicines. Your doctor should determine if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex.

Be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had any heart problems (e.g., angina, chest pain, heart failure, irregular heart beats, or heart attack)
- have ever had a stroke

- have low or high blood pressure
- have a rare inherited eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa
- have ever had any kidney problems
- have ever had any liver problems
- have ever had any blood problems, including sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- are allergic to sildenafil or any of the other ingredients of VIAGRA tablets
- have a deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or ever had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- have stomach ulcers or any types of bleeding problems
- are taking any other medicines

VIAGRA and Other Medicines

Some medicines can change the way VIAGRA works. Tell your doctor about **any medicines** you are taking. Do not start or stop taking any medicines before checking with your doctor or pharmacist. This includes prescription and nonprescription medicines or remedies. Remember, VIAGRA should never be used with medicines that contain nitrates (see *VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone*). If you are taking a protease inhibitor, your dose may be adjusted (please see *Finding the Right Dose for You*). VIAGRA should not be used with any other medical treatments that cause erections. These treatments include pills, medicines that are injected or inserted into the penis, implants or vacuum pumps.

Finding the Right Dose for You

VIAGRA comes in different doses (25 mg, 50 mg and 100 mg). If you do not get the results you expect, talk with your doctor. You and your doctor can determine the dose that works best for you.

- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor prescribes.
- If you think you need a larger dose of VIAGRA, check with your doctor.
- VIAGRA should not be taken more than once a day.

If you are older than age 65, or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg) of VIAGRA. If you are taking protease inhibitors, such as for the treatment of HIV, your doctor may recommend a 25 mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48 hour period.

How To Take VIAGRA

Take VIAGRA about one hour before you plan to have sex. Beginning in about 30 minutes and for up to 4 hours, VIAGRA can help you get an erection if you are sexually excited. If you take VIAGRA after a high-fat meal (such as a cheeseburger and french fries), the medicine may take a little longer to start working. VIAGRA can help you get an erection when you are sexually excited. You will not get an erection just by taking the pill.

Possible Side Effects

Like all medicines, VIAGRA can cause some side effects. These effects are usually mild to moderate and usually don't last longer than a few hours. Some of these side effects are more likely to occur with higher doses. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, flushing of the face, and upset stomach. Less common side effects that may occur are temporary changes in color vision (such as trouble telling the difference between blue and green objects or having a blue color tinge to them), eyes being more sensitive to light, or blurred vision.

In rare instances, men have reported an erection that lasts many hours. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If not treated right away, permanent damage to your penis could occur (see *How Sex Affects the Body*).

Heart attack, stroke, irregular heart beats, and death have been reported rarely in men taking VIAGRA. Most, but not all, of these men had heart problems before taking this medicine. It is not possible to determine whether these events were directly related to VIAGRA.

VIAGRA may cause other side effects besides those listed on this sheet. If you want more information or develop any side effects or symptoms you are concerned about, call your doctor.

Accidental Overdose

In case of accidental overdose, call your doctor right away.

Storing VIAGRA

Keep VIAGRA out of the reach of children. Keep VIAGRA in its original container. Store at room temperature, 59°–86°F (15°–30°C).

For More Information on VIAGRA

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction. Only your doctor can decide if it is right for you. This sheet is only a summary. If you have any questions or want more information about VIAGRA, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, visit www.viagra.com, or call 1-888-4VIAGRA.

23-5515-00-4

VIAGRA®
(sildenafil citrate) tablets

Pfizer U.S. Pharmaceuticals

War I, I quote Georges-Marie Chenu, a lecturer on the Balkans at France's equivalent of the War College: "For them, the Serbs are good even if they are doing bad."

Pickup Basketball

I read with great interest and excitement Timothy Harper's article "The Best Pickup-Basketball Player in America" (*April Atlantic*). I, too, am a fifty-year-old professional who is passionate about—my wife would say obsessed with—the game of basketball. Thank you for sharing Allan Dalton's remarkable story with me.

Lawrence M. Baill
Minneapolis, Minn.

I am the "best" pickup-basketball player in America, and I invite Allan Dalton to a friendly game or two the next time he is down Pennsylvania way.

Victor J. Viser
Middletown, Pa.

The Kept University

The Haas School of Business, at the University of California at Berkeley, is not a business. This distinction is clear to us, but obviously a source of confusion to Eyal Press and Jennifer Washburn ("The Kept University," *March Atlantic*). The major problem with their article is the unsupported insinuation that private financial support from corporations and wealthy donors inevitably corrupts the mission, purpose, and operations of a public university. The authors provide virtually no empirical evidence for their claims. Moreover, the Haas School examples they cite are misleading and inaccurate. For example:

- The article quotes the student newspaper as describing the Haas School's beautiful new building complex as "plastered with corporate logos." This is inaccurate. Some rooms and spaces are named (no logos) in honor of generous individual and corporate donors, in keeping with a tradition in higher education going back decades, if not centuries. The donors paid for the building, but they have no control over the school's operation.

- The authors report that the title of the Haas School dean is the BankAmerica dean. True. But they are wrong in hinting, however obliquely, that this implies some control over the school's affairs by the

BankAmerica Foundation, which donated \$2 million. The money established a discretionary fund to be used by the dean for faculty research and curricular support, and to recruit talented new faculty members.

• The most preposterous insinuation is that a wealthy benefactor can control choices about curriculum and teaching at the Haas School. The authors imply that a gift from Haas School alumnus and Gap founder Donald Fisher resulted in the teaching of a case study involving The Gap. This is nonsense. Using the Gap case as a teaching aid—a choice entirely up to the course instructor—probably had a lot to do with the fact that The Gap is one of the most successful retail clothing chains in the world and well worth studying. If the authors had actually visited the Haas School, they would have quickly discovered that neither its faculty members nor its students feel any constraints on their objectivity and tough-mindedness when it comes to analyzing the business model of The Gap or of any other company, regardless of whether it or its founder has contributed to the school.

The article raises the legitimate issue of whether direct corporate sponsorship of academic research might potentially bias research results or the choice of research topics. This is not a new concern. Two decades ago the University of California was the first major research university to require researchers to publicly disclose financial interests in companies sponsoring their work, and those reporting requirements have increased considerably over time. In addition, like all academic research, research done by the Haas faculty (which, incidentally, was ranked No. 1 in the world in a recent survey of business schools published by *The Financial Times*) is subject to a rigorous process of independent, anonymous peer review at both the proposal-funding and publication stages. The focus, methodology, and conclusions of such research reflect the decisions of Haas faculty members and students, not the decisions of the school's corporate and alumni sponsors.

Laura D'Andrea Tyson
Dean, Haas School of Business
University of California
Berkeley, Calif.

Eyal Press and Jennifer Washburn reply:

Nowhere does our article state—or insinuate—that private financial support “inevitably corrupts” the mission of a public university. Our article discusses numerous benefits that have resulted from university-

industry collaborations since passage of the Bayh-Dole Act. Nevertheless, we do cite extensive empirical evidence showing that industry money can bias research, such as the study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* by Mildred Cho, which found that 98 percent of papers based on industry-sponsored research reflected favorably on the drugs being examined, as compared with 79 percent of papers based on research not funded by industry.

Although Dean Tyson is correct that Berkeley's student newspaper, *The Daily Californian*, which we quoted, was mistaken in reporting that corporate logos appear throughout the Haas School of Business, numerous buildings and rooms at Haas (the Wells Fargo Conference Room, the BankAmerica Forum) are named after corporate donors—a practice that is understandably controversial at a public university, just as it would be at a public grade school. Yes, Haas is a school, not a business (we never state otherwise). But the increase of corporate-endowed chairs and buildings risks eroding that distinction, by allowing corporate donors to have their names affiliated with our leading public universities. Such affiliations confer immense prestige, even if corporations do not exert any direct control over the schools' affairs.

Although Dean Tyson seems to believe that Haas students and faculty have no qualms about such ties, there is abundant evidence that many at U.C. Berkeley do. *The Daily Californian* reported that some people at Berkeley questioned using The Gap in an introductory business course, “because one of Haas' major contributors is Don Fisher, the owner and founder of the Gap, Inc.” Also, after Berkeley signed a five-year, \$25 million sponsored-research deal with Novartis, a survey of faculty members in the College of Natural Resources revealed that more than half believed it would compromise academic freedom and the university's commitment to research in the name of the public good.

Finally, it is true that researchers at the University of California must disclose financial ties, but this is because public universities are subject to the public-disclosure laws of their states. Filing a request for such information is inherently cumbersome, however, and at private institutions the information is harder to obtain. A recent study we cited found that a mere 0.5 percent of articles in journals and other scholarly publications include information about the authors' financial ties.

JACK LONDON
HAD REJECTION
SLIPS PILED
5 FEET HIGH.
IF ONLY
POETS & WRITERS
HAD BEEN
AROUND BACK
THEN.

Jack London was so passionate about his craft, he wrote 15 hours a day. But he still had trouble getting published. Because writing is one thing; marketing your work is a whole different story. Poets & Writers can help. From publishing seminars to on-line message forums to information on grants and contests, we have the resources to help you make your submissions a success. To learn more, visit our Web site at www.pw.org. Because if you're like London, and you write until your hands ache, at least we can make the publishing process less painful.

Poets & Writers

T E JULY ALMANAC



Health & Safety

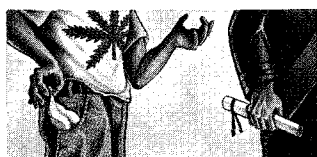
Men who suffer from low testosterone levels gain a new therapeutic option this month, as topical testosterone gel becomes widely available by prescription. Up to 5 million American men are affected by low testosterone, which can diminish libido, reduce musculature, decrease bone density, and cause impotence and depression. The treatments available to date have drawbacks: oral testosterone has been linked to liver damage; injections can be painful and result in fluctuating testosterone levels; and the adhesive patches can irritate the skin. The new medication, Androgel, is applied daily to the shoulders, upper arms, and/or abdomen, from where it is gradually released into the bloodstream. It has its own drawbacks: studies have shown that the gel can be transferred from patients to their partners during "vigorous skin to skin contact," causing the partners' testosterone levels to rise.

Arts & Letters

July 6: The most important early Italian painting to be offered for sale since the 1970s will be auctioned by Sotheby's in London today. *The Madonna and Child Enthroned With Angels*, a 10-inch-by-eight-inch wood panel by the 13th-century Italian artist known as Cimabue (born Ben-civieni di Pepo), was discovered last year in a Suffolk manor during preparations for an estate sale. It had been hanging there for 150 years. It is believed to be part of a



tabernacle depicting scenes from Jesus' life. The painting is expected to sell for at least \$3.2 million. It is one of only about a dozen existing works credited to Cimabue, who was a pivotal figure in the development of the Italian Renaissance. One reason for the scarcity could relate to the temperament of the artist, whose nickname means "Bullheaded": he is said to have destroyed those of his works with which he or others found fault.



Government

July 1: Today suspensions of federal financial aid begin for college students who have been convicted of selling or possessing illegal drugs. The suspensions are mandated by the 1998 re-authorization of the 1965 Higher Education Act. They can last a year or longer, depending on the number and kind of convictions, though students can shorten their suspensions if they complete a rehabilitation program and pass two random drug tests. Although the provision met with little opposition in Congress, it has generated campus protests across the country. Critics argue that it singles out low- and moderate-income students, fails to address drug education and intervention, and, by denying money to troubled students when they may need it most, will cause more problems than it solves. They also point out that the act does not disqualify students convicted of other crimes, including theft, rape, and murder. Also as of today, gay couples in Vermont can form civil unions entitling them to virtually all the legal rights and responsibilities of marriage. This is the first law of its kind in the nation; it was passed last spring.

Demographics

The peak season for air travel begins this month. Last summer was the worst to date in terms of weather-related delays, largely because of a spate of thunderstorms and hurricanes. This summer's travelers may fare better in the event of storms, owing to a new system for gathering and responding to information about weather conditions. For the first time ever, the Federal Aviation Administration and the airlines will rely on a single, continually updated forecast. Previously they all employed their own meteorologists, a system that engendered confusion and disagreement over FAA-proposed flight routings, which the airlines claimed were often based on outdated forecasts. Planes that need to be re-routed to avoid storms can now make more frequent use of low-altitude routes and military and Canadian airspace, which should also shorten delays.



Q&A

Is flipping a coin an equitable way to reach a decision?

It depends on how the coin is flipped. Mathematicians advise that the only way to ensure a fair toss is to catch a coin cleanly in the air. If the coin is allowed to land on a flat surface and roll around before coming to rest, variables such as weight and contour will bias the outcome. For example, the heads side of a penny, which depicts Lincoln's profile, is slightly more hollowed out, and therefore lighter, than the tails side, which depicts the Lincoln Memorial; consequently, a penny rolling on its edge is more likely to land heads up. Wear and tear can also affect the outcome of a toss: a coin whose edge is more heavily worn on one side will tend to fall toward that side.



The Skies

July 16: Full Moon, also known as the Thunder Moon, the Hay Moon, and the Killer Whale Moon. A lunar eclipse occurs tonight, visible in the western states and in Hawaii and western Alaska before dawn. **26-27:** Jupiter, Saturn, the waning crescent Moon, and the bright star Aldebaran are grouped together in the eastern sky just before dawn. **30:** Observers in the northwestern United States can see a partial solar eclipse as the Sun is setting.

100 Years Ago

Martha Baker Dunn, writing in the July, 1900, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "[A] modern notion which helps to make the path of the school-teacher a thorny one is the theory that a child ought to be putting out simultaneously and in every direction as many feelers as a centipede has legs. As a matter of fact, a pupil who has learned thoroughness and application has acquired *something*, even if he cannot explain the precession of the equinoxes or tell how many feathers there are in a hen. There used . . . to be a good many poetic similes in which the unfolding of a child's mind was likened to the gradual opening of a flower, leaf by leaf. The revised plan admits of no such sentimental and slow-moving processes. A child's mind is now opened like an umbrella, expanding equally and instantaneously at all points, and, fortunately for the child, it also resembles the umbrella in that it sheds a good deal more than it retains."



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The Ford Focus was built with an eye, or in this case an ear, toward inventive recycling. That's why we shop for jeans. Admittedly we're not particular about style or size, we want them well worn and ready for the shredder so they can be treated and bonded and packed under the hood as sound-deadening material in every Focus we build in Saarlouis, Germany.

Liz Tait, in her role as our Minister of Denim, thinks jeans could be good for a lot of things after they've finished being good to you.

Ford Motor Company

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Outtakes

The rise of provisional history

ONE day last fall I found myself in a radio station waiting to go on the air. It was shortly before Thanksgiving, and in an adjacent room two Native American activists had just finished taping a commentary assailing the European encounter with America—an annual Thanksgiving Day tradition on public radio. The commentary was running about thirty seconds too long, and a technician was fielding suggestions and excising words and phrases to shorten the tape. I could hear the conversation over a loudspeaker. One of the activists would say, “Let’s cut ‘including defenseless women and children.’ What would that give us?” A few moments later the technician would reply, “Okay, that was three seconds.” The activist again: “What about ‘and destruction’ after ‘environmental rape’?” Tech-

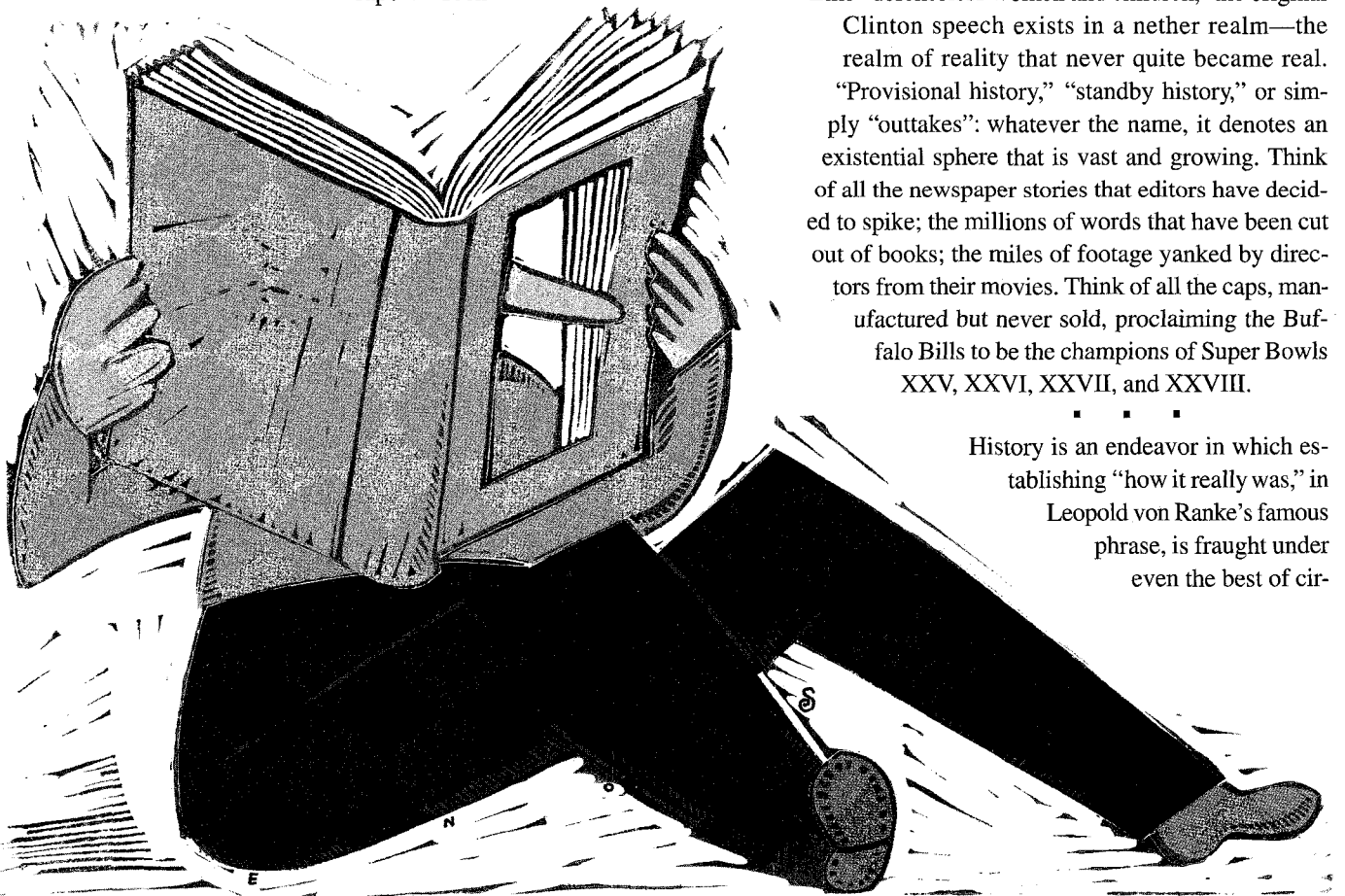
by Cullen Murphy

nician: “Good. We’re close. Two more syllables.” Activist: “Maybe kill ‘brutal’ before ‘slaughter’?”

I was reminded of this episode recently after coming across a new book called *In Our Own Words*, a collection of twentieth-century American speeches edited by Senator Robert G. Torricelli and Andrew Carroll. One of the items in the book is the original draft of President Bill Clinton’s speech to the nation in August of 1998, when he finally admitted to an extramarital relationship. It contains unfamiliar sentiments such as “I should have acknowledged that I was wrong months ago, but I didn’t” and “I also want to apologize to all of you, my fellow citizens. I hope you can find it in your heart to accept that apology.” This draft was eventually discarded, in favor of the more aggressive version the President actually delivered.

Like “defenseless women and children,” the original Clinton speech exists in a nether realm—the realm of reality that never quite became real. “Provisional history,” “standby history,” or simply “outtakes”: whatever the name, it denotes an existential sphere that is vast and growing. Think of all the newspaper stories that editors have decided to spike; the millions of words that have been cut out of books; the miles of footage yanked by directors from their movies. Think of all the caps, manufactured but never sold, proclaiming the Buffalo Bills to be the champions of Super Bowls XXV, XXVI, XXVII, and XXVIII.

History is an endeavor in which establishing “how it really was,” in Leopold von Ranke’s famous phrase, is fraught under even the best of cir-





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cumstances. History that actually occurred remains an active part of the environment, constantly reinterpreted and ever on the move. The parallel domain of what was about to happen but didn't is in some ways easier to get a handle on. It is bounded and inert—a specimen in a display case.

Presidential history is filled with examples, if only because the lives of Presidents are so amply documented. There is the scorching letter Lincoln never sent to General George Meade after the Battle of Gettysburg. Meade had won a tenuous victory, but then failed to pursue Robert E. Lee's retreating army. "Again, my dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape," Lincoln wrote. "Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it." The letter was discovered years later in an envelope bearing a notation in Lincoln's hand: "To Gen. Meade, never sent, or signed."

The Harry Truman papers are littered with messages that never hit their targets. "He called them his 'longhand spasms,'" the historian David McCullough writes, "and there appears to have been something sudden and involuntary about them. They seemed to serve some deep psychological need, as a vent for his anger, and were seldom intended for anyone to see." The famous letter to the critic Paul Hume, who had criticized Margaret Truman's singing, was probably meant to be one of these. Truman's press secretary, Charlie Ross, would ordinarily have intercepted it, but he suffered a fatal heart attack a few hours before Margaret's recital.

In 1998 a Texas public-relations executive who had been an advance man during John F. Kennedy's 1963 visit to Dallas reopened some old files and found the jokes that Kennedy was supposed to tell at the luncheon he never attended. The University of Texas and the U.S. Naval Academy had been ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in college football at the time, and were scheduled to meet in the Cotton Bowl. "I like the idea of the Navy-Texas game, personally, and I'd like to do what I can to help," Kennedy was going to say, "except that I know how you folks feel about federal intervention."

Two speeches that Richard Nixon never gave surfaced not long ago in the National Archives. One was the text

of the grim public statement Nixon would have made had the 1969 moon landing gone awry, stranding two astronauts on the lunar surface. The second was the speech that Nixon would have given in August of 1974 had he decided not to resign the presidency: "We must not let this office be destroyed—or let it fall such easy prey to those who would exult in the breaking of the President that the game becomes a national habit."

It used to be routine—and maybe still is—for newspaper reporters to compose two stories on the eve of a presidential election, to cover both eventualities. Somewhere in the files of *The New York Times* sits the text of a "Man in the News" article, datelined "Sioux Falls, South Dakota," that was prepared for the November 7, 1972, edition but never published. The article, by Douglas Kneeland, begins:

As it turned out, George Stanley McGovern, the preacher's son from Avon and Mitchell, really was "right from the start."

He kept saying he would win, serenely, earnestly, convincingly.

In October of 1992 President George Bush readied an arsenal of one-liners for use in his first televised debate with Bill Clinton—lines that in the end he could not work in. If Clinton had stumbled in the area of foreign affairs, Bush was prepared with ripostes. "Now I know what to get you for Christmas—a world globe," was one possibility. Had a Clinton gaffe involved the name of some world leader, Bush was ready with this: "If you ever go on *Jeopardy*, don't choose the category Foreign Heads of State."

■ ■ ■

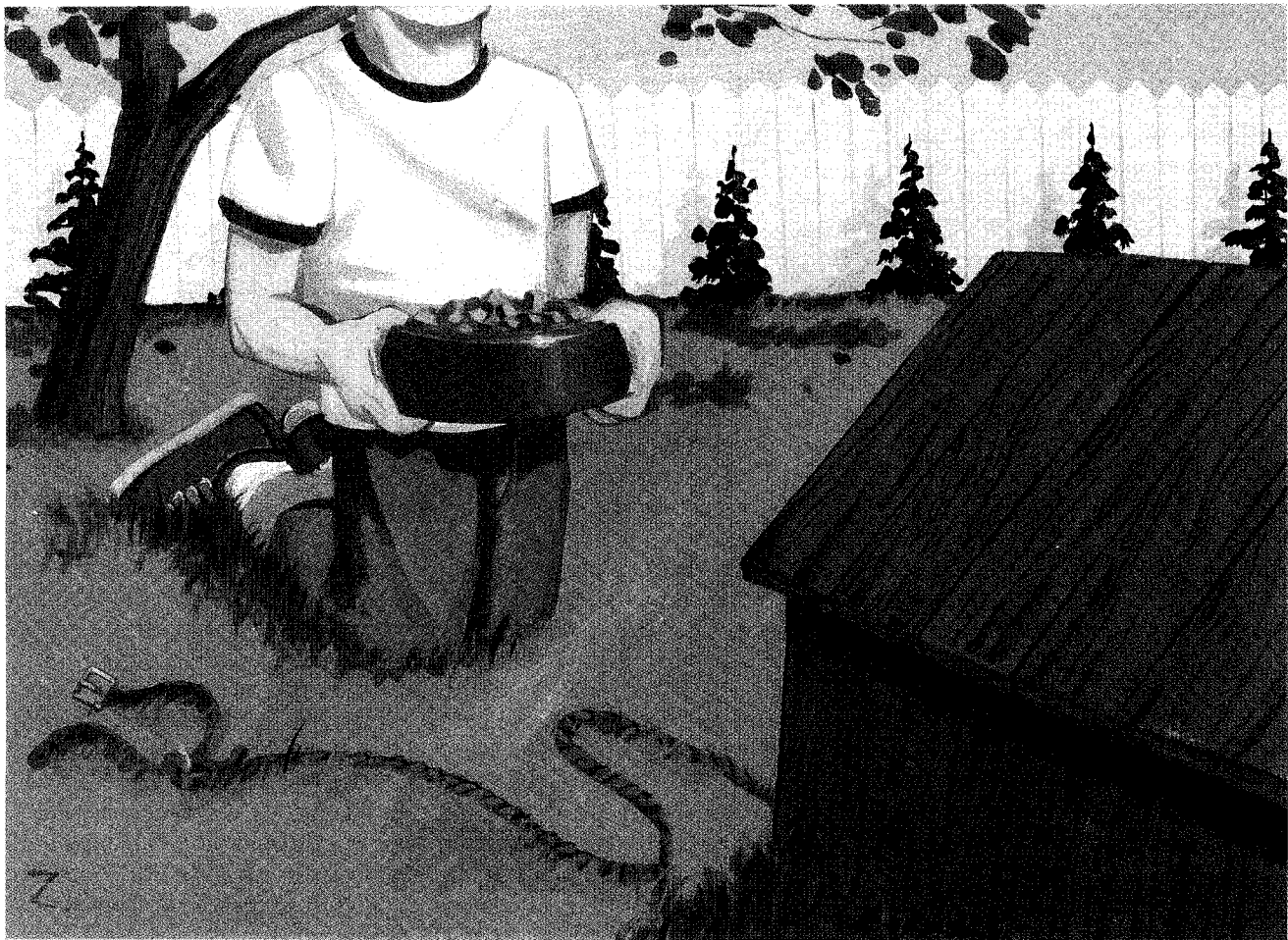
The examples cited here suggest a rough taxonomy. Some things (the sending of Lincoln's letter) don't happen simply because of second thoughts. Other things (the telling of Kennedy's jokes) don't happen because the natural course of events is altered by the unforeseeable. A third category (the Clinton and Nixon speeches, the McGovern article, the Bush ripostes) consists of things that went as far as they did with the prior understanding that existential fullness might well be denied them. This is the arena of provisional history's fastest growth—the arena of contingency planning, of unrewarded anticipation.

Devotees of counterfactual history—that is, the asking of "What if?" questions about the past—argue that the exercise constitutes a powerful defense against the dangers of "hindsight bias": the illusion that because events unfolded in a certain way, they had to unfold in just that way. Provisional history springs from a very different impulse—call it "foresight hedging." It results from playing out "What if?" questions not about the past but about the future, and taking account of the likely possibilities.

It is hard to think of an aspect of modern life that isn't helping to write provisional history. The awarding of each Oscar statuette sends four written-but-never-delivered acceptance speeches into provisional history's archives. Nearby are stacks of Y2K worst-case scenarios, and aging cassettes of political "attack" advertisements—recorded and held at the ready, like a nuclear deterrent, but for some reason never aired. The archives hold the detailed plans the White House drew up for Nixon's state funeral, in the event he died in office (the plans called for "California, Here I Come" to be played "softly and slowly" before the President began the journey to his final resting place). They hold the discarded endings to *Fatal Attraction* and *Patriot Games* that only focus groups have seen.

Outtakes are commonplace these days under movie and television credits—you see them after *Fresh Prince* and *The Parent 'Hood*, and after anything with Jackie Chan or Sammo Hung. Even *A Bug's Life*, an animated film, concluded with cartoon sequences that seemed like outtakes. It is refreshing to see such things become a noteworthy feature of the historical record. Provisional history offers just as many cautionary lessons as any other kind.

We are all of us great strutters on provisional history's stage. The archives of anyone's private history contain speeches that were almost made, jokes that were nearly told, phone messages that came close to being left. Attics and basements and bookshelves everywhere are shrines to provisional history, to false starts and flagging ambition. That moldering object in a dark corner of the garage may look to some like an exercise treadmill. But to the trained historical eye it says, "To Gen. Meade, never sent, or signed." ☞



From the Leash to the Laboratory

*Medical-research institutions
draw on a thriving black market in stolen
and fraudulently obtained pets*

IF you're driving south on Missouri Highway 67 into Poplar Bluff, past acres of strip malls, a sharp left at Route 53 takes you into hardscrabble country, a place of violence and squalor in the southeastern part of the state. I made the drive on a saunalike morning in early August, reaching the

by **Judith Reitman**

Poplar Bluff Sale Barn around seven o'clock. Vendors had been arriving since dawn. On most days of the week livestock sales are held in the corrugated-tin auction barn. But Friday is Trade and Sale Day. Merchants were setting up folding tables under colorful umbrellas on the barn's dusty four-acre lot,

across from the Gospel Rescue Mission and a dilapidated farmhouse hemmed in by the skeletons of junked cars. Some of the merchants were hawking homemade jams; others offered "emu juice"—a supposedly medicinal broth—or shotguns. Still others were "puppy-mill" breeders selling allegedly purebred dogs for \$10 or \$20 each.

But the big money, one vendor told me, is in the dogs sold to suppliers to medical-research labs. She pointed to the back lot, which was crowded with campers, station wagons, and pickups with license plates from Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. A number of the vehicles were fitted with "dog cabs," containing six or eight dogs crammed into small wooden crates. A red cattle trailer was packed with purebreds and mixed breeds. Men sweating under feed caps were pulling dogs out by their legs or muzzles. Many of the dogs were emaciated, their bellies swollen from worms or other parasites, their coats matted with

their own feces and urine. The scene was hauntingly quiet. When a dog did bark, it was reproached with a swift kick.

Around eight-thirty a nondescript white van pulled onto the lot. The driver—a registered dog dealer, licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture—swung open the loading doors, revealing dozens of empty metal cages. About a hundred dogs were for sale on the lot. Soon sellers were clustered around the dealer's van. The day's trading had begun.

The University of Missouri's primary dog dealer has a documented history of record-keeping violations.

High-volume dealers like this one keep an inventory of 500 to 700 dogs in their kennels at any given time. They are supposed to buy dogs only from sellers who raised the animals themselves or bought them from "random sources"—people who can prove that they raised them. Although USDA regulations call for dealers to obtain certain information from each seller, including a description of the animal being sold, many dealers will accept simply the seller's name, address, and signature as proof of ownership. "Hell, they don't raise those dogs," said a grizzled coon hunter who was observing the proceedings. "Some of them, they just pick up the dogs off the street and sell 'em. Make good money, too."

POPLAR Bluff sits in the heart of dog-dealing country. The Midwest's interstates and local roads are conduits for a vast network that transports stolen dogs from virtually every state for sale at trade days like this one. The number of dogs that go missing each year under suspicious circumstances has been conservatively estimated by shelters and pounds, animal-protection organizations, and veterinarians to be in the hundreds of thousands. Puppy-mill breeders and the organizers of dog fights buy their share, but the animals also end up as subjects in the biomedical-research industry, which

pays top dollar. Although it is impossible to know how many dogs this is, Patricia Jensen, then a former USDA assistant secretary, testified in 1996 that "one of the most egregious problems in research" is the "introduction of stolen and fraudulently acquired pets into the process."

The clients who contribute to this trade include reputable medical schools across the country, where dogs are used in cardiovascular, bone, orthopedic, urological, burn, and dental research, in ballistics tests, in radiation and drug studies, and for dissection in physiology labs. Although federal law specifically prohibits the sale of stolen dogs, the agency charged with enforcing it—the USDA, through the Animal Care program of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)—has taken little effective action. And congressional initiatives, including virtually all attempts to pass stronger legislation, have failed.

The system for acquiring dogs for medical research is based on a complicated hierarchy, in which accountability is diffused. The system has remained largely the same since 1966, when Congress passed what soon became known as the Animal Welfare Act. The act set standards of treatment for medical-research animals and stipulated that labs can acquire them only from dealers who have been licensed by the Secretary of Agriculture—a provision directly aimed at preventing the sale of stolen pets to labs. The USDA was not eager to assume responsibility for enforcing the act. When Congress proposed appointing the USDA to do so, the agency tried to be relieved of the duty; in a letter to Congress the Secretary of Agriculture suggested that an agency "more directly concerned" with the pet-theft issue should be considered for the task. That argument failed.

Any adult citizen of the United States, even a convicted felon, can acquire a USDA license to sell dogs to research institutions. There are two kinds of dealer licenses. Class A dealers, according to the broad terms of the act, breed dogs for sale. When they buy from Class A dealers, institutions have some assurance that they are buying dogs intended from the outset for research. But many institutions buy their dogs from both Class A and Class B dealers; the dogs sold by Class B dealers are less expensive and may offer a broader range of research subjects. This is where most problems lie.

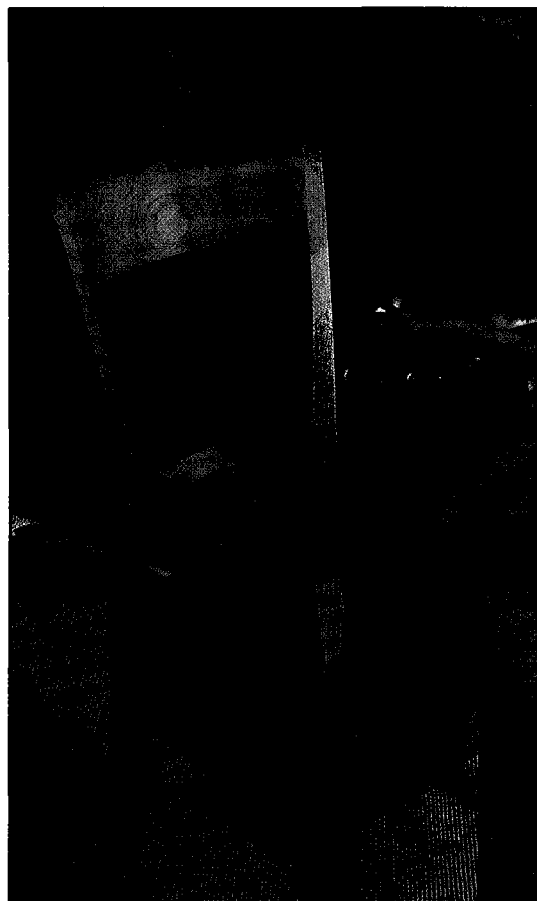
Class B dealers are permitted to buy dogs from unlicensed sellers, known as "bunchers," as long as the bunchers can prove that they bred and raised the animals on their own premises or obtained them from someone who did. This restriction is aimed at ensuring that each dog can be traced to a legitimate owner—that the animals are not stolen or obtained through fraudulent means. But for it to be enforceable dealers must keep and make available accurate records, and bunchers must give them accurate information. In its 1998 annual report to Congress, APHIS claimed that it was able to trace the original owners of more than 90 percent of the dogs sold for research. However, this number was derived by extrapolating from a very small sample. A random selection of inspection reports pertaining to five of the largest dealers shows that all have had record-keeping violations. Over the years there have been dealers who have not even allowed inspectors on their property.

In any given year as many as forty bunchers may supply a single high-volume dealer. For those unconcerned with the law, dogs are easy enough to come by. Bunchers may cruise neighborhood streets, picking up any dogs they encounter. They may obtain unclaimed dogs from veterinary clinics by offering to find homes for them, and may answer "free to good home" ads placed by owners trying to find someone to care for dogs they can no longer keep. Often a buncher answering such an ad brings along a child, in order to create a convincing picture of a welcoming home.

The price structure that has evolved puts certain breeds particularly at risk. The most valuable dogs are Labrador retrievers, German shepherds and shepherd mixes, Dalmatians, spaniels, golden retrievers, hounds, and border collies. Sometimes called "serum dogs," owing to backwoods folklore that a serum made from the blood of these dogs could cure cancer, they are prized by labs because they have large chests, which make them preferred subjects for cardiovascular research. Labs will pay a dealer as much as \$800 apiece for them (the dealer has paid the buncher about \$25 apiece). Serum dogs are generally guaranteed to remain alive for seven to ten days after purchase. Less-desirable breeds and mixes are sold by the pound, as "junk dogs" (usually guaranteed to live for a week) or "acute dogs" (guaranteed for only forty-eight hours).

DAN Hannes, the sheriff of Cedar County, Iowa, dreads the spring. "That's when pet thieves come around," he says. The peak dog-stealing season extends through summer, with thefts occurring in state after state throughout the South and the Midwest. In August of 1998, during the Iowa State Fair, in Des Moines, some 350 dogs from the area were reported missing. Last summer an animal-welfare society in southeastern Missouri got calls about more than 200 missing dogs. Two years ago in Carroll County, Mississippi, several enraged hunters drove into a buncher's encampment, where they found their missing hounds; the hunters rammed the buncher's fence with their trucks and seized their dogs. Other Mississippi residents have found their dogs chained in bunchers' and dealers' kennels and at local trade days. "If you have a pet missing, the Ripley Trade and Sale Day is a good place to look," says Pete Samples, a criminal investigator with the police department of Ripley, in northern Mississippi, where one of the largest dog-trading events in the country is held. Last January more than 120 large purebred dogs were reported missing in southwestern Michigan. Vans purporting to represent an "animal-management service" had been seen cruising neighborhoods there. Similar vans have been associated with missing-pet episodes in Maryland and Alabama.

APHIS has broad authority to stop such thefts, by requiring dog dealers to comply with the law. It can assess and collect hefty fines and notify the sheriff's office about animals that are believed to be stolen. The agency is required by law to inspect and monitor kennels to ensure that the animals have been legally acquired. It is responsible for requesting the prosecution of any dealer who has stolen and sold a dog to a research facility, and is empowered to bring an injunction against any dealer it believes to be trading in stolen pets. However, the agency has taken few productive measures to halt the abuses. "We cannot be the on-site police," says Ron DeHaven, the deputy administrator of APHIS. "We can't be at every facility every day to make sure they are adhering to the regulations." It is difficult to prove that animals have been obtained through theft or fraud, DeHaven argues; the agency can usually prove only that dealers are keeping inaccurate or improper records.



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In those instances when APHIS has gone after a dealer for record-keeping violations (a process that can take years, during which time the dealer may remain in business), it has generally reduced the penalties outlined by law, holding closed-door administrative hearings and allowing the dealers to stipulate to fines that are just a small fraction of what the Animal Welfare Act permits.

In a handful of instances APHIS has gathered enough proof of theft or so-called theft by deception to have dealers brought to criminal court. Even court-ordered penalties have typically not been severe. A case in point: APHIS placed an Oregon dealer, Betty Davis, and her husband under surveillance for fourteen months starting in December of 1994. During that time the couple sold ninety dogs to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, in Los Angeles, the University of Southern California, and the Los Angeles VA Medical Center. APHIS did not request a restraining order against the Davises, however. DeHaven told me that when the research institutions learned of the investigation, they "immediately ceased buying animals from [the Davises], so in essence [their] business stopped early in that two-year period." But court records show that the Davises continued buying and selling dogs until February of 1996, when the surveillance ended. Federal pros-

just four to six months of detention in their own home. They were fined a total of \$379.31—\$354.31 to reimburse one research facility for returning some animals, and \$25 for conspiracy.

A look at how APHIS handles dealer violations of all types may be instructive. "I have seen many instances where APHIS program officials are dismissing violation cases without the benefit of any investigation," one senior investigator, complaining of an "erosion of enforcement" within the agency, wrote in an internal memo in 1995. According to a 1995 report by the Office of the Inspector General, which oversees USDA practices, the fines collected by the agency during the previous year were no more than \$300 per facility—minimal amounts considering that many dealers report gross incomes of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Dealers view these fines as a "cost of doing business," the OIG concluded. "If we are talking about a small business and we are not putting them out of business, then any monetary penalties that we impose limit their ability to provide adequate care to the animals," DeHaven says.

In its 1998 report to Congress, APHIS boasted that its "stringent enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act" had helped to reduce the number of Class B dealers selling dogs for research from 104 in 1993 to thirty-three in 1998 (there are currently twenty-eight). Just as relevant, though, is the number of bunchers supplying these dealers—a statistic the report does not give. However, in 1996 Michael Dunn, an assistant secretary for marketing at the USDA, told Congress that during the previous year the agency had searched for as many as 1,800 suppliers who were providing dogs to dealers, then forty in number. Furthermore, although there is a regulation that limits to twenty-four the number of dogs a buncher can sell each year, this is easy to get around. If dealers identify bunchers as "employees," those bunchers can legally obtain as many dogs for those dealers as their trucks can carry.

The USDA's leniency may reflect longstanding allegiances. APHIS has historically regarded institutions and their suppliers as its constituency. A 1995 Animal Care newsletter stated, "We exist to support our clients," referring to animal-welfare licensees. Top APHIS officials frequently go directly from the service to

employment in the medical-research industry. For instance, James Glosser, the administrator of APHIS from 1988 to 1991, was subsequently hired as the assistant dean of veterinary medicine at the University of California at Davis. Conflicts of interest exist at lower levels of the agency as well. One former APHIS veterinarian told me, "Some inspectors talk about getting into dog dealing as good business when they retire." Others don't wait for retirement: at least two inspectors have themselves run breeding operations—in one case a substandard one—even while employed by APHIS to monitor kennels.

Conscientious inspectors can't count on the agency's support. Some enforcement officers who have been relocated believe they were moved because of their zeal. Others—for example, Marshall Smith, a former enforcement officer, who worked for the agency for almost twenty years—tell of being ostracized for seeking punitive action against dealers.

Legislative action to halt pet trafficking has so far failed. In 1988 Senator Wendell Ford, of Kentucky, whose son's hound had been stolen, introduced the Pet Theft Act, which was intended to prohibit dealers from buying dogs and cats at trade days and increased the penalties for repeated pet theft violations. The act was defeated, owing in large part to opposition from the USDA and the National Association for Biomedical Research, a powerful lobbying organization, which argued that the bill would "inhibit research."

In October of 1993 Representatives George Brown and Charlie Rose, of California, sent a petition to the USDA, co-signed by twenty-seven of their colleagues, accusing the agency of "dereliction [of] duty" in the face of "evidence . . . that USDA licensed animal dealers routinely buy and sell stolen family pets." In 1996 Representative John Fox, of Pennsylvania, introduced the Family Pet Protection Act, but this, too, was vigorously opposed by the NABR. In January of 1997 Representative Charles Canady, of Florida, introduced the Pet Safety and Protection Act, which was aimed at eliminating the entire random-source category. That bill did not make it out of committee; Canady reintroduced it last year.

In response to congressional outcries the USDA mounted a series of

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ecutors subsequently filed charges. The Davises were indicted on eight counts, including defrauding the government and conspiring to obtain dogs through misrepresentation and deception—from "free to good home" ads and veterinary clinics and off the streets. The matter was settled last year by a plea bargain, in which Betty Davis pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of conspiracy. The remaining counts of the indictment were dropped. The Davises were sentenced to

stolen-dog task forces. Their investigations resulted in little action. Two inspectors from a 1990 task force told me that when they examined the records of the leading midwestern dealers, they discovered rampant fraud. Dealers were listing suppliers who had long been dead, who did not exist, or who were obtaining animals from “free to good home” ads. The inspectors outlined these abuses in their reports. But instead of fining the dealers and revoking their licenses, the agency concluded that there was no evidence of pet theft and offered to license a large number of area bunchers as dealers. As for trade days, the agency deemed that they could be markets for “individuals desiring a quality pet.”

In 1993, on the heels of the Brown-Rose petition, the USDA initiated another task force. According to Marshall Smith, the task force was quietly disbanded, with no action having been taken, even though there was indisputable evidence that dealers were falsifying records and breaking the law. The USDA commissioned yet another task force in 1994. This time dealers were not even questioned about their sources. Smith, who participated in several task forces, speaks of the agency’s “selective enforcement—case after case against dealers dismissed, and violators relicensed with barely a slap on the wrist.” He describes the agency as having a “profound disdain for the Animal Welfare Act, for the public, and for Congress.” The USDA “provides a safe haven for criminals,” Smith says.

The USDA and APHIS repeatedly point to their “concerted efforts” to address pet theft. For example, in a statement issued last February 13, in honor of Pet Theft Awareness Day, Michael Dunn spoke of the agency’s firm stand on pet theft and its “significant progress in stopping the trafficking in stolen animals.” The agency argues that its enforcement abilities, however, are limited by inadequate staff and funds. It maintains that most stolen dogs go to puppy-mill breeders or dog-fight organizers and that the likelihood of a stolen pet’s being used in research is “remote.” Nonetheless, the APHIS Web site advises pet owners whose animals are missing to get in touch with animal dealers and research facilities in their area—an implicit acknowledgment that pets may end up there.

ARE research institutions aware that they may be buying former pets? Dogs bearing tattoos and subcutaneous microchips—unmistakable forms of identification—were found in the kennel supplying the Universities of Iowa and Michigan. “I worry about the sources all the time, but we rely on enforcement by the USDA and on the integrity of the dealer,” says John Harkness, who oversees the animals used in teaching at Mississippi State University. Harkness told me that he has tried tracing the origins of some of the university lab’s dogs from dealers’ records, “but it gets very murky.” John Young, a lab-animal veterinarian at Cedars-Sinai, has also tried tracing the origins of animals he has bought. He says that he was given false information by Class B dealers and their bunchers, however, and that his lab was a “victim” of dealers who were obtaining animals through illegal means. As a result, Cedars-Sinai stopped buying from Class B dealers in 1995.

Other lab directors I spoke with readily acknowledged the poor health of the dogs they buy (several described receiving sick, dying, and dead dogs from suppliers to whom they nonetheless remain loyal), but were less forthcoming on the topic of pet theft. Some admitted knowing of record-keeping violations on the part of their dealers, but they appear to turn a blind eye, regarding the problem as a matter solely for the USDA. For example, the University of Missouri’s primary dog dealer has a history of record-keeping violations that is documented both in APHIS inspection reports and in court records. But Leroy Anthony, the manager of the school’s animal laboratory, says, “He’s still in business, so he’s doing something right.” Ron Banks, the lab-animal veterinarian at the University of Colorado Health Science Center, told me that although he reviews inspection reports for suppliers who are new to the university and for those who have had violations, the overall responsibility lies elsewhere. “I worry about every part” of the system, he says, “but we have to rely on the USDA.”

Institutions can afford to do business with dealers whose practices may be questionable: no laboratory has ever faced legal action for buying stolen pets. Some institutions have gone to court rather than reveal the sources of their animals. The State University of New York lost a two-year legal battle in 1998, when the New

York Court of Appeals ordered it to disclose its records to a public-interest group.

The National Association for Biomedical Research maintains that pet theft is a “myth” and “an enduring falsehood,” and continues to battle against restraints on dealers. The NABR Web site states that animal-rights activists use the “illusion that there is a demand by researchers for stolen pets” to generate “opposition to animal research in general.” Pets that have disappeared, the group contends, are far

*Some institutions
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more likely to have wandered off than to have been stolen. As for cases in which lab animals are obtained through “free to good home” ads, the Web site points out that “even in those instances the pets were turned over voluntarily—they were not being stolen from owners who wanted to keep them.” The site acknowledges that there have been “rare cases” in which family pets have ended up in research laboratories, but argues that USDA-mandated holding periods for pounds and dealers ensure that owners have adequate time to find a pet before it is sold for research.

BY about 9:00 A.M. in Poplar Bluff the dealer was slamming shut his loading doors, muffling the barking of the dogs now crammed within. Only a few scraggly dogs remained on the lot. One buncher was preparing to haul his leftover dogs across the state, to an auction in Joplin. One was going to dump his dogs by the side of the road. Another talked about shooting his. Some of the small dogs were consigned to a “bait bin” on the lot, to be sold as live bait in organized dog fights. By ten o’clock the back lot was deserted—a patch of dust under a flat sky. Several boys were combing the ground for coins and cigarette butts. But there was little to salvage: just a couple of dog collars attached to a metal chain. ☾



Flotsam

Looking for buried treasure at auction

ONCE a year, usually in late July, an auction house on the Upper East Side of Manhattan named William Doyle Galleries sells off the contents of banks' abandoned safe-deposit boxes. Doyle is a second-tier auction house, a bit lower in prestige than places like Christie's and Phillips and Sotheby's, where I was dragged as a child

by my parents, who collected nineteenth-century American paintings. These were the kinds of places where the patrons wore dark suits and bid on items by languidly raising numbered paddles into the air, and where the auctioneers did nothing more than announce the lots and acknowledge the offers with an air of aristocratic boredom that the patrons tried hard to mimic. I really did find these affairs boring, but also terrifying: often we had to wait hours before the lot my parents wanted to bid on came up, during

which time I could do nothing but sit rigidly still, afraid even to scratch an itchy nose, lest the auctioneer mistake my gesture for a bid on a Gilbert Stuart portrait or a Tiffany lamp or a Calder mobile.

Years later, when I was finished with college and living down south and had

taken to collecting certain antiques myself (radios, crank phonographs, 78s), I began frequenting country auctions in towns with names like Thorsby and Clanton and Hartselle. These events did not resemble the auctions I had attended as a child. They were more like monster-truck rallies: loud, spirited affairs, in atmosphere a combination of county fair and barroom brawl and the infield at a NASCAR race. The auctioneers at these events were more like sideshow barkers, goading bidders on with exhortations like "The finest one I've ever seen!" and "Come on, now, I know you

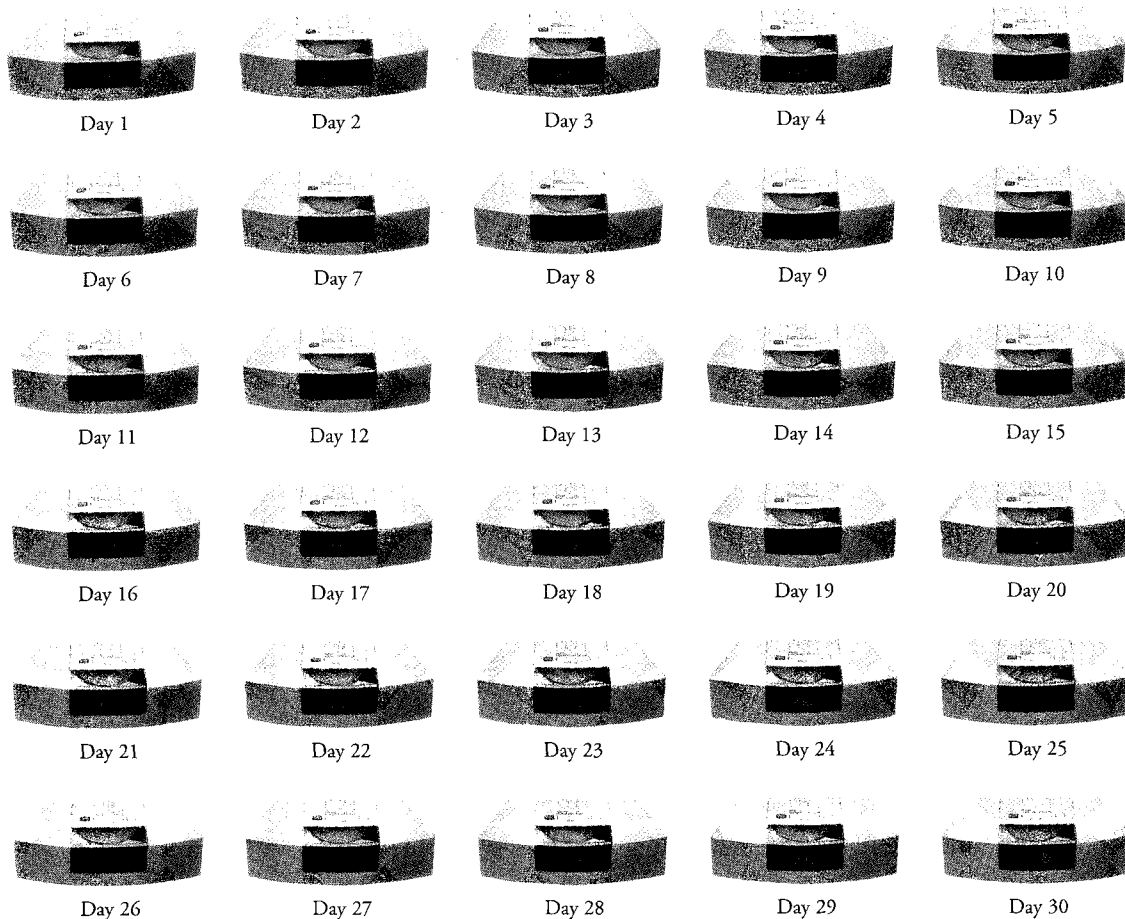
didn't come all the way out here to go home with nothin'!" and "You'll never find another one like it!" and "Damn, son, cain't you do no better than that?" They called the sales from behind raised lecterns, on either side of which stood spotters, who searched for bids and acknowledged them with a loud "Ho!" I suspect that at least half the bids they acknowledged were offered by phantoms, a con to drive up the selling price. Still, the real bidders, myself included, always believed that this was the kind of place where a slightly sophisticated collector might come away with a real bargain. I, at least, never did.

When I moved back to New York, I stopped going to auctions—there was comparatively little entertainment value in stuffy New York sales, and I had no room for new acquisitions anyway. Still, out of habit and curiosity I scanned the auction notices at the back of the *New York Times's* Help Wanted section every Sunday. One week, amid the ads for auctions of estates and antiques and office furniture and store fixtures and old computer equipment and electronics and automobiles and the inescapable "ephemera" and "miscellaneous," I saw this:

Notice is hereby given that on July 21, 1999 at the premises of William Doyle Galleries, 175 East 87th Street, New York NY 10128, there will be sold to the highest bidder the contents of safe deposit boxes previously rented to the below listed persons from Emigrant Savings Bank. . . .

And it occurred to me that a safe-deposit-box auction was about as close as an average, non-metal-detector-owning city dweller might come to finding buried treasure.

AS soon as I pushed through Doyle's front door, a few days later, I had to fight to keep from being pushed back out into the street by the hordes that had arrived ahead of me for the pre-sale viewing. Dozens of men and women, old and young, in suits and shorts, clutching price guides and notebooks, clambered to find an open spot in front of one of the glass cases and then clamored to get the atten-



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tion of one of the well-dressed young women who stood behind the counters looking variously bemused, fearful, and disgusted. The patrons shouted; the girls fled or acted busy or merely ignored them. Once in a while, though, one of them would acknowledge a customer by silently fulfilling his or her request and allowing a closer examination of one of the sale's 985 lots. This meant either removing it from the case and placing it atop the glass or retrieving it from a shelf behind the case and handing it to the patron. Most of the things in the cases were rings or necklaces or jeweled wristwatches in their original boxes or precious gems or South African Krugerrands or Canadian Maple Leaf gold pieces or collectible coins, either loose or sealed in small pouches of clear plastic. These were certainly the kinds of things one might expect to find in a buried pirate chest, but in this instance their provenance was no more exotic than a jewelry store or a bank counter. They were not booty, or serendipitous finds, or even sentimental heirlooms. They were investments. They were sterile.

The lots behind the cases were larger, mostly pulled together according to category from many different safe-deposit boxes and packed into deep rectangular Tupperware containers. There were more coins and some paper money, some wristwatches and bracelets, costume jewelry and pocket knives, cigarette cases and belt buckles, baseball cards and sheets of stamps, flatware and brooches, souvenir figurines and souvenir rattles and souvenir bone carvings and souvenir tusk carvings and souvenir masks and a set of Franklin Mint antique-car medals and a set of Franklin Mint Treasures of the Louvre medals and a box of cheap old pens and a box of cheap old digital watches ("Welcome to Miller Time!") and a cheap old camera and an alarm clock and a pocket calculator and two copies of "Monster Mash" on LP. (Two in the same auction! What are the odds?) I found these things marginally more interesting than the lots in the glass cases, if only by virtue of the fact that they were less valuable on almost any scale imaginable. But they, too, were mass-produced and indiscriminately sold and anonymous, and they, too, left me cold. They had been buried, to be sure. But I could not conceive of a standard other than intrinsic market value by which a stranger might consider any of them treasures.

I WAS about to leave when something mildly remarkable happened: one of the women behind the counter actually asked me if she could show me anything else. Feeling that I must not squander such a rare gift, I scanned the stacks of plastic containers behind her and spotted one whose contents appeared both unusual and unfamiliar. As she fetched it for me, I looked it up in the catalogue. No. 945: Lot of assorted medals and buttons.

She set the container down on the counter in front of me, and I stared at it for a few seconds, trying to discern what lay inside and if it was worth my time even to peel off the lid. Eventually I set my disillusionment aside. No. 945 consisted of two long rectangular boxes sitting atop what appeared to be a pile of loose debris. One of the boxes was labeled "Distinguished Flying Cross," the other simply "Air Medal." Each was beautiful, consisting of a bronze-colored medallion and a multicolored ribbon. When I turned them over, I was disappointed to see that they were not inscribed; there was no indication on the boxes of who had received them, or for what particular deeds. Still, I knew that unlike everything else I had seen that day, they represented something more than just metallurgy and textile and design. They represented bravery, perhaps, or dedication, or loyalty, or commitment, or patriotism—and certainly, if nothing else, a strong sense of duty. More important to me, they represented a singular human being, a distinct quality of character, a specific achievement. Tragically, they also represented, I imagined, the estrangement from memory of that human being and his character and his achievement. These medals had landed in such an auction only because no one knew of their location or even their existence at the time of the boxholder's death.

I took the two medals out of the container, hoping I might find some solace in the garbage, the justifiably forgotten flotsam, that lay underneath. But I was wrong. It wasn't garbage at all. It was:

An Honor Kappa Society medallion, dated 1940. A bronze boxing medal. A name tag from the London Chemical Engineering Congress of 1936. A LINDSAY, PERROTTA, GARELIK button. A Saint Luke's Hospital pin. A red "MOCKBA" pin. A BOYCOTT GRAPES button. A New York State National Guard medal dated 1898, emblazoned with a pair of sabers crossed over the motto "100%," and in-

scribed "J. G. Clark, Jr." A McCARTHY button. A runner-up medal from the Poly Prep Upper School Squash Tournament of 1938. A pair of captain's bars. A LOCAL 15 A F of L button. A money clip bearing the slogan "Nature's Resources Engineered for Man's Benefit." A pin: "Haganah" in Hebrew letters. A pendant bearing a Celtic cross and an emerald inside a gold-plated heart. A McGOVERN button. A charm of two angels, fastened to a card imprinted with Psalm 91: 10-11, from the Sacred Heart League of Walls, Mississippi. A 1938 membership badge in the Oasis Society, inscribed "E. H. Garbe." A mezuzah. A jeweled pendant containing a mustard seed, glued to a card reading "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible unto you. (Matt. 17:20)." A medal: "50th Anniversary, American Institute of Chemical Engineers, 1958." A Saint Anthony medal, inscribed "I am a Catholic, in case of accident call a priest." A medal: "1975 Teaneck Dot & Dash, P.J. Class B, R. Coleman, APSA." A crucifix. A Star of David. A carnival medallion bearing a four-leaf clover, inscribed "Rosalie Frieda Blau." A pin: wings and a propeller. A medical ID bracelet: "Neck Breather." A pin: "U.S.S.R. Expo 70." A pin: U.S. Marshal. A pin: the Western Wall. A medallion bearing the likeness of a religious landmark, inscribed "Souvenir of Pilgrimage, The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, NY." A medallion of the Aztec calendar. A key ring, inscribed "Finder Please Return to Gimbel Brothers." A pin: "Viribus Unitis 1914." A pin: Lenin's profile. A pin: "AIChE section Chairman." A pin: "CPP." A pin: "Volunteer Service, United Hospital Fund." A pin: "American Cancer Society Volunteer." A pin . . .

When I was finished, I estimated that the plastic container held perhaps fifty lives, and maybe a hundred achievements. I replaced the lid and handed it back to the woman behind the counter. She looked tired.

Later, at the auction, someone did buy Lot 945. I don't know who he was—a collector, perhaps, or an artist, or a person who archives props for movies and theater productions and television shows. All I do know is that the catalogue estimate for Lot 945 was \$50-\$75 and it went for \$250. As I rose and headed for the door, I worked it out: Five dollars per life. Two dollars and fifty cents per achievement. Quite a bargain. ☼



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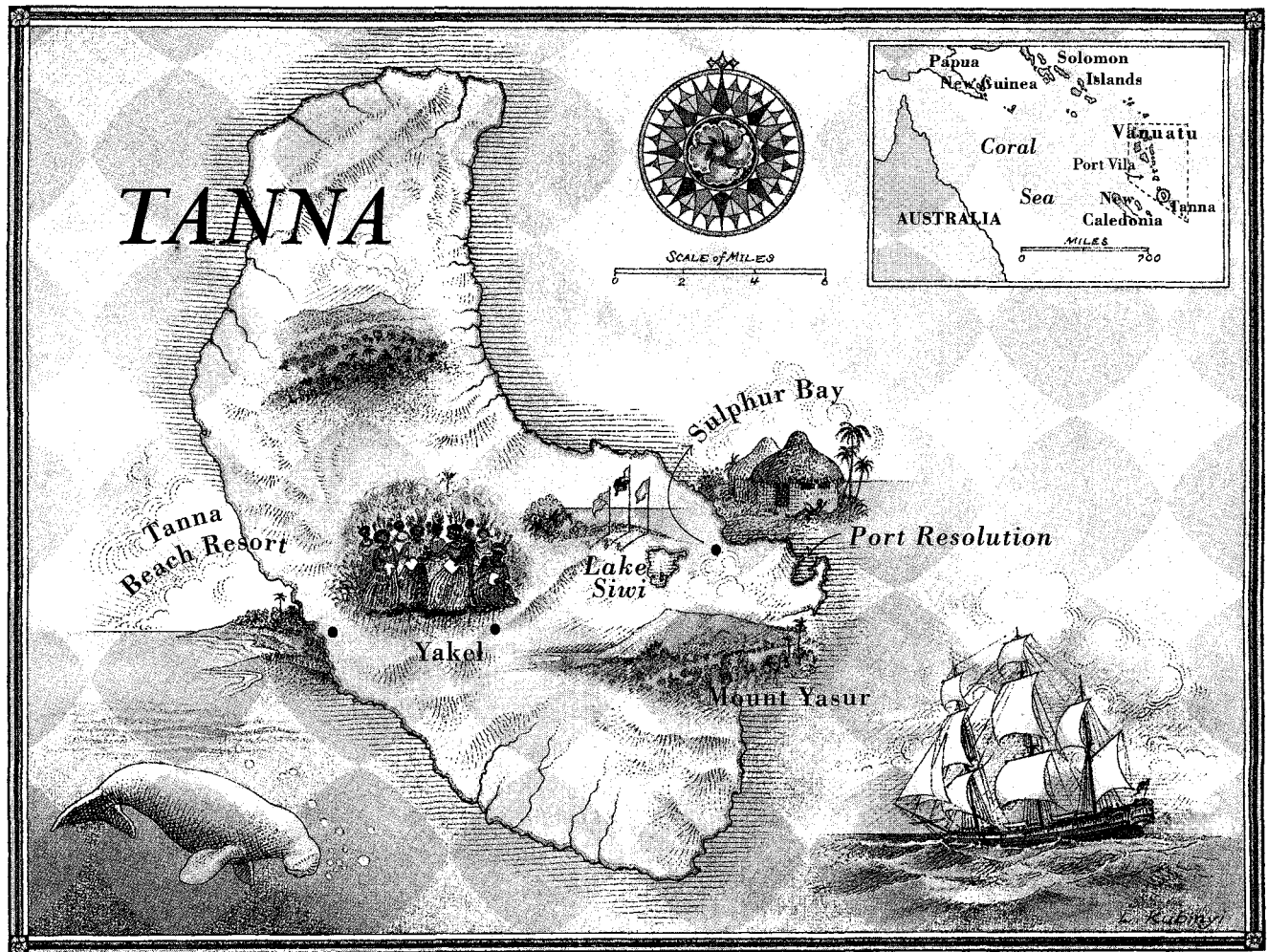
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A Mythic South Pacific

*On Tanna, in Vanuatu, the height of civilization
is a resort with electricity and showers—
but that's not the point*

THE Pacific elicits odd reactions from those who choose to explore its faraway places. There are the malcontents who retreat into lives of remote tropical squalor.

There are the yachties who planned to spend a year, perhaps two, sailing the South Seas, and inexplicably find them-

selves ten years later still at anchor in some blue lagoon, awaiting favorable winds that will take them not very far.

by J. Maarten Troost

There are seekers of converts or love or adventure who discover only that they can no longer reside in the continental world. Island fever and other, more corporeal illnesses drive the

less-committed elsewhere; those who remain discover that the Pacific is the last great place to disappear.

That is not what my wife, Sylvia, and I had in mind when we arrived in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, in the southwest Pacific. We had lived for two years in Kiribati, the Pacific's most unchanging nation, where time remains stuck somewhere between thatch and tin. We were leaving that world, returning to the hubris of modernity, and needed an interlude. We thought that on this holiday we would want a little luxury, something to eat besides fish, and the cosmopolitan air offered by Port Vila. Instead we discovered—after a couple of days of refined nothingness, during which we reacquainted ourselves with hot water, gin and tonics, and restaurants—that it was the raw Pacific we yearned for as a last, splendid destination. We wanted, it turned out, to disappear again for a while. And so we sought guidance from our friends in Port

OK, so the mountains of Wyoming may not be the best place to teach children about oceanography.

But then fifth grade teacher Linda Hileman would

never let the fact she lives 1,500 miles from the ocean ruin a good lesson plan.

In fact, she not only teaches her class about our undersea world, she takes them

**The Kids In
Mrs. Hileman's Class Are
Often In Over Their Heads.**

there thanks to a little imagination and lots of borrowed scuba equipment. With the aid of several certified safety divers, Mrs. Hileman familiarizes her students with the equipment and basic techniques of scuba diving. Then she takes them diving at a neighborhood pool set up with underwater activity stations. There the students attempt tasks such as riding a tricycle, communicating via hand signals and other work-related tasks that give them an appreciation for the difficulties oceanographers face living and working underwater. For helping her land-locked students immerse themselves in the science of oceanography, State Farm is proud to present Linda Hileman with our Good Neighbor Award® and to donate \$5,000 in her name to the Saratoga Elementary School Library, in Saratoga, Wyoming.



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Vila, who all pointed in the same direction. Soon we were boarding a Twin Otter and departing for Tanna, an hour's flight south. Here we found one of the Pacific's most intriguing islands, with a vibrant natural beauty and a remarkable culture scarcely touched by the world outside.

Vanuatu was known as the New Hebrides until 1980, when it achieved independence from Britain and France, which had jointly governed it in a peculiar condominium arrangement. The country consists of more than eighty islands, which range south toward New Caledonia and north almost to the Solomon Islands. To the east is Fiji, and to the west—a long way west—is the Great Barrier Reef and the nearest continent. In this Melanesian country English, French, and Bislama, the local pidgin, are the dominant languages, but more than a hundred indigenous languages also remain. Not only the vast ocean inhibits communication but also the rugged terrain of the islands themselves, born from the fury of the Pacific Ring of Fire.

Tanna is a young island, approximately a million years old, and perhaps this explains why it appears temperamental, even moody. There are mountains on Tanna, some rising above 3,000 feet, with long, verdant ridges. A path, generously called a road, rises and crests these mountains, and to follow its serpentine route is to understand why on this island alone at least seven distinct indigenous languages are still spoken. Tanna (which means "earth") is segmented by geography and nature. Where mountains do not impede progress, the rain forest does; each pocket, each clearing where a village of thatch huts stands secure under—and even in—the majestic tentacles of a banyan tree, exists disconnected from all but its nearest neighbors.

CAPTAIN Cook was the first Westerner to alight on Tanna. He arrived on his second Pacific voyage, in 1774, aboard the H.M.S. *Resolution*, determined to seek out the source of strange flares he had spotted in the night sky. He was greeted by the islanders in the fashion that

seemed to typify most of his first encounters—with a tense blend of curiosity and hostility. He was not a god on Tanna. More likely, Cook and his men were regarded as ghosts, spirits returning from where the dead reside—a hypothesis that would explain why islanders were keen both not to offend him and to see him on his way. Before leaving, though, one of Cook's men, pointing to the ground, asked an islander what this place was called. "Tanna" was the reply.

Fortunately, our welcome was considerably warmer than that extended to Captain Cook. Of course, we didn't announce our arrival with cannon fire. There are perhaps a dozen places for visitors to stay on Tanna, mostly simple guesthouses providing food and shelter and little else. We divided our week there between two accommodations, at opposite ends of the island. The difficulty of traveling on the roads and the varied flavors offered by different corners of the island dictated our plans. At the eastern end of Tanna is the Port Resolution Yacht Club, a grandiloquently named but simple, earthy place that by both choice and default epitomizes the ecotourism ideal. The guesthouse is village-owned, and guests are made to feel that their welfare is important to the community. From the hibiscus flower that was left each afternoon on our bed to the daily meal consultation, the staff offered a kind professionalism that to our minds outweighed the lack of electricity and flush toilets. But it was the beauty of the setting that we

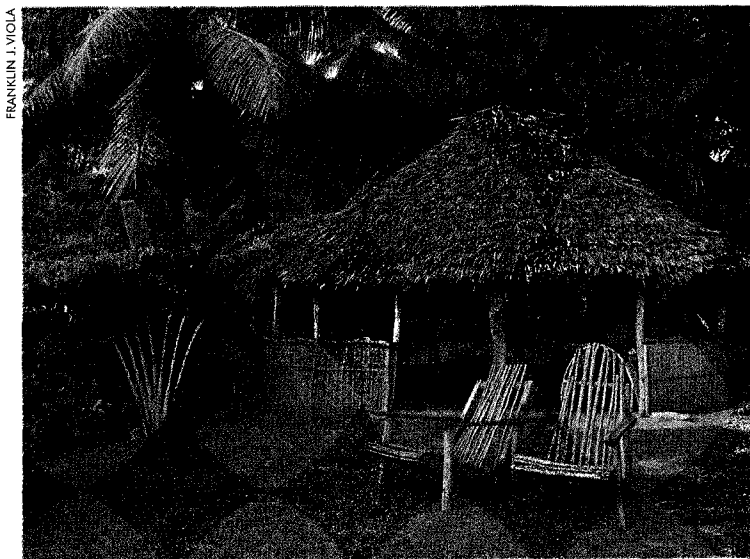
***The Port Resolution Yacht Club:
the swank name belies the reality***

found most striking. We stayed in a traditional dwelling overlooking the small bay that Captain Cook named for his ship. From the half-moon black-sand beach below, our hut was invisible, its walls of pandanus and roof of thatch obscured in the verdant tangle of trees and flowering vines that descend with the hills to meet the sea. On the clear, sky-blue water below us we often saw an islander in a dugout canoe thump his paddle flat against the water's surface, signaling to the resident dugong, or sea cow, until the semi-tame creature appeared, ready to play. The dugong, all 500 pounds of him, is frisky and physical, and swimming with him, as visitors can do, is like wrestling with a nine-foot child who doesn't quite know his own strength.

The guesthouse is also near Mount Yasur, the island's volcano and the source of the flaring night lights that attracted Captain Cook. Across the bay from the guesthouse, steam rises from vents in the hillside in mysterious bursts. On the beach, at low tide, steam rises from shallow pools. Walking there one afternoon, I came across a local family. Two boys scampered around their father while his wife tended the boiling salt water. She was cooking cassava and yams, which bobbed in the tidal pool. I asked the man if people often cooked here. "Oh, yes," he said, and then searched for a word, "Bachelors."

The steam vents are linked to Mount Yasur, which is billed as the world's most accessible live volcano, a description that makes it sound less imposing than it is. Mount Yasur, though it rises only a thousand feet, is a grim and forbidding thing, surrounded by a desolate ash plain

that contrasts startlingly with the flamboyantly green landscape elsewhere on Tanna. Standing at the base of Mount Yasur, near Lake Siwi, a large, lifeless pond dotted with uprooted trees carried there by a cyclone, one can inhale the sulfur, listen to the rumbling, watch the crater emit gray ash clouds—and realize suddenly that although the idea seemed compelling when elsewhere, to continue on up to the rim of the vol-





Tanna's Mount Yasur—easily accessible and continually active

cano is not an entirely reasonable thing to do. Three people were killed on the rim recently when they approached on a particularly active day.

It is possible to hike to the summit, but it is a better idea to hire a four-wheel-drive vehicle, which most guesthouses can supply, along with the mandatory guide. The volcano is at its most dramatic in darkness—not a good time to attempt its steep slopes and crevices on foot. Our truck took us to within 400 feet of Mount Yasur's rim. Stepping out of the truck, we followed a narrow trail that led to the summit. Guided by flashlights, we wove around steam vents and boulders, and felt as if we were approaching Mordor. The air was redolent of sulfur and the ground was warm, but it was the noises—whooshing and venting and blasting—that made starkly obvious that this was not an inanimate mountain but a portal into the living earth. The volcano, when not exploding, sounds as if it contains an ocean sloshing in a chamber of rock. Earlier a light rain had fallen, and

as we crested the rim, we were greeted by swirling steam lit an ethereal red. Small blasts sent lava and molten rock shooting in firecracker arcs just below the rim.

With the dawn we trudged as far as we dared around the crater, careful of the rim, lest we plummet 500 feet to the inferno below. The sun rose, illuminating the blue Pacific and the green hillsides. As we admired the sunrise, the volcano breathed deeply and sent forth an explosion so vehement that we dropped to the ground. Fire-red bursts of magma and rock flew high above the rim, and as our guide had instructed us, we watched to see whether this molten detritus was flying our way. We were exhilarated—and terrified.

ON other Pacific islands contact between the West and traditional cultures has often created hybrid societies containing the worst of both worlds. Missionaries, traders, planters, colonists, soldiers, tourists, and the international aid community have turned more than a few islands into places where the inhabitants seem adrift—tethered neither to the modern world of strip malls and stock markets nor to the old one of storytelling and cash-

free ways. Tanna, whose people remain unreachable by, or dismissive of, modernity's noisy allure, is still its own place. And the village of Yakel, deep in the interior of Tanna, is truly extraordinary.

Yakel is one of several villages on the island to have forsaken modernity entirely. Its people live according to the dictates of *kastom*, or “the old ways,” in which religion, tradition, and the harvest are intertwined. The men wear only *nambas*, or penis sheaths, and the women grass skirts. Homes are little more than extensions of the forest, with some built among the branches, and others, particularly those used to take shelter from cyclones, created in the hollows between the roots of banyan trees. Pigs are the equivalent of a stock portfolio. To wander through the village is to step back into an age not even dimly remembered by Westerners. Yet the inhabitants of Yakel, the only *kastom* village to allow visitors, are not unaware of the outside world. The village sells a few handicrafts to visitors, and uses the money to buy axes, knives, and other necessities. It also permits outsiders to attend traditional ceremonies, such as circumcision

rites, for a fee. Mostly, though, Yakel seems to move within its own primeval reverie, according to a clock set by the cycles of weather and tradition.

We happened to visit at a special time, when most of the inhabitants had already departed for the Nekowiar, a three-day bacchanal that occurs but once every three or four years; lesser versions of the ceremony occur more often, usually in September or October. Peace between warring villages lies at the origin of this ceremony, but it has evolved to the point where it seems to encapsulate everything—fertility, the harvest, *kastom*, village pride, and the glorification of both pigs and kava, the narcotic mud-water that derives from the roots of the *Piper methysticum* shrub and leaves imbibers feeling dreamy and content. The Nekowiar occurs when one village invites another to participate. It is both a unifying event and a challenge.

We, too, departed for the Nekowiar, which was being held in a small village high in the forested hills. First, however, we settled into the Tanna Beach Resort, which was closer to the ceremony than

the Port Resolution Yacht Club was, and is also the island's most comfortable hotel (electricity, toilets, showers). It was an odd experience: musing over a wine list, reading *Yachting* magazine while nestled in an Adirondack chair overlooking a boundless ocean, sleeping easy under a quiet ceiling fan in our spacious bungalow, and then departing in the small, dark hours of the morning to ride in the back of a pickup truck until mud left the wheels spinning and sliding. From there we trudged up a steep hill a half mile or so, listening to the chanting, the singing, the energy, that emanated from the village. This was not a *kastom* village, though the only difference apparent to us was that here people wore clothing made of cloth. No more than a few visitors, in addition to the locals, slogged through the muck in anticipation of what is perhaps Vanuatu's most extraordinary spectacle.

On our first day at the ceremony the village chief greeted us: "You are welcome here. It is still safe." This, of course, left us feeling unsafe. Around us were swirling circles of women, painted and layered with ornaments, singing and dancing with a rapturous intensity as men from another village taunted them on the periphery. The words of each song, the cho-

reography of each dance, were new, as they are for every Nekowiar, and the participants had spent months practicing in secret. The men would dance the following day, and then through the night men and women would dance together—wildly, with even spectators finding themselves hurled into their midst. On this one night unsanctified couples may retire into the forest and couple without social repercussions. That this night of abandon was not yet upon us made us "still safe."

The high point of the Nekowiar occurs at dawn on the third day, when a dance called the *toka* is performed. As on the other days, we reached the village streaming with sweat and layered with mud, but of course no one paid us any mind. Everyone eagerly awaited the dance and the feast that would follow, for which nearly 200 pigs would be slaughtered. When we arrived, shortly before dawn, a hundred people were running from one end of the well-trampled festival clearing to the other, calling the male dancers of the *toka* with a rhythmic cry. Just as dawn came, the dancers emerged from the bush. They all seemed possessed of that mad energy that derives from sleeplessness, and everything seemed charged and beautiful.

Swirling circles of women during the three-day Nekowiar festival

PHILIPPE METOIS



BESIDES those on Tanna who subscribe to *kastom*, there are also some Presbyterians, and in the strange village of Sulphur Bay the John Frum movement, which is often referred to as a cargo cult, finds its epicenter. The John Frum people, who are unique to Tanna, make up nearly a third of the island's population.

In Sulphur Bay the Stars and Stripes flutters improbably, together with the flag of the U.S. Navy and the national flag of Vanuatu, which has been hoisted to appease a sensitive government. When the New Hebrides were granted independence, twenty years ago, not everyone on Tanna was happy about the change, and the island was the site of some violence, though the populace is certainly peaceful now. When we visited Sulphur Bay, the rumbling belches of Mount Yasur, which loomed overhead, could be heard above the thunder of surf. The village, arranged around a grassy square, seemed both tidy and desolate.

Guidebooks tend to characterize the John Frum people as a befuddled group awaiting the return of an enigmatic U.S. soldier who promised to bring them the material benefits of Western civilization. In truth, no more is known about John Frum than is known about Paul Bunyan. Like other Pacific islanders, the people of Tanna were deeply impressed by the flow of materiel into the region during World War II. Then, too, they are Melanesian, and much was made here of sightings of African-American soldiers, who physically resembled the islanders. In most places such experiences would no doubt simply lead to a recognition that the world is big and strange. On Tanna an explanation that would mesh with the islanders' lives was sought for such phenomena as jeeps, planes, and dark-skinned men from distant lands.

As we stood inside a John Frum church and spoke, through a translator, with one of the village elders, we realized that this movement is complicated and fantastic. In essence, the John Frum people have adapted bits of Western civilization to suit themselves. According to the elder (I subsequently tried to confirm what he told me, but the written record on the group is sparse), Jesus was from Tanna and was



PHILIPPE METOIS

crucified on a red cross that now stands inside the simple wood-and-thatch church. The cross is only about four feet high and looks suspiciously like the Red Cross on the sides of military ambulances, but I didn't ask about that. Bethlehem is the wooded hillside overlooking the village. The River Jordan is Lake Siwi, beneath Mount Yasur. This knowledge, the elder explained, was lost until missionaries arrived with the Bible, which returned the Tanna people's story to them. African-Americans originated in Tanna, and the black soldiers seen during World War II were part of a secret army fighting for the interests of Tanna. And John Frum? According to the elder, he told people to ignore the missionaries and their prohibitions on dancing and kava drinking, and instead to live their lives according to *kastom*; if they obeyed, he would return someday, flush with goodies. Awaiting him, underneath the volcano, is an American flag and a people strong in their convictions.

Tanna sometimes feels like a Swiftian dream. The island is a powerful place, befitting its elemental name. The volcano, breathing its fire, is a constant threat, serving to remind us that we are not quite masters of our world. The hills, draped in a green, entangling canopy and rustling with the Pacific breeze, seem both inviting and indifferent. The waves, rolling in on the black-sand beaches, suggest distant storms. Everywhere on Tanna it is possible to feel wonder. And those who live on this peculiar island live in a time of their own making. Tanna is a place nearly disappeared. ☼

To reach Tanna, visitors will need to fly first to Port Vila, to which there is frequent air service from Fiji and Australia; there are usually two flights a day between Port Vila and Tanna. For more information about Vanuatu generally, consult the Lonely Planet guide to the country, which was recently updated. To make inquiries about the Port Resolution Yacht Club, call Island Safaris, in Port Vila, at 011-678-23288 (there is no phone at the guesthouse itself). To inquire about the Tanna Beach Resort, call the resort at 011-678-68626. The best time to visit Tanna is from May to October. Travelers should be aware that malaria is a problem there and should take appropriate precautions.

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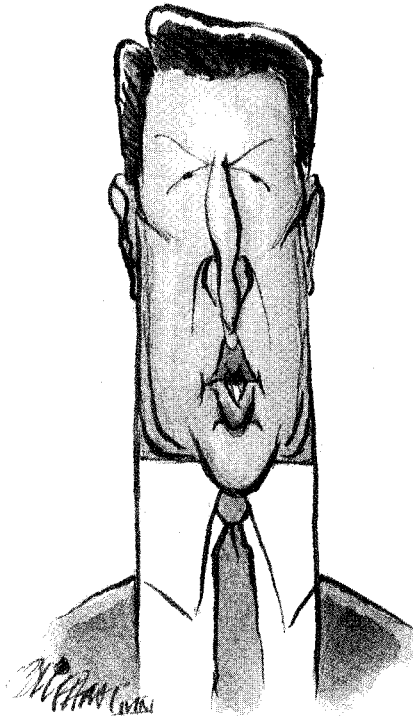
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An Acquired Taste

by JAMES FALLOWS

Al Gore is the most lethal debater in politics, a ruthless combatant who will say whatever it takes to win, and who leaves opponents not just beaten but brutalized. But Gore is no natural-born killer. He studied hard to become the man he is today

AL GORE has often been mocked for his speaking style—even by himself, in wooden jokes about his wooden manner. He stopped telling those jokes a year or two ago. Through this year's presidential campaign he has become more aggressive and animated on the stump. Yet oratory is still classed among Gore's liabilities; like the elder George Bush in 1988, he is a Vice President who inevitably suffers when his speeches are compared with those of a sitting President with unusual rhetorical gifts.



But Gore has accomplished something Bush never did. Over the course of the 1990s, so gradually and methodically that it was not fully appreciated, Gore emerged as America's most lethally effective practitioner of high-stakes political debate. Political debate is not, of course, like other forms of debate. It is not primarily a dispassionate contest of logic, in which ideas are pitted against each other to see which is most compelling. It is debate as political combat, in which the contest of ideas is subordinate to the struggle for dominance be-

tween the debaters. Victory requires knowing all the details of the opposition's proposals, and it's no surprise that Gore should excel at that. But it also requires a taste for face-to-face confrontation, and a sense of showmanship. In these, too, Gore has, less predictably, excelled.

Debate has also been the medium in which Al Gore has displayed the least attractive aspects of his campaigning style: aggressiveness turning into brutality, a willingness to bend the rules and stretch the truth if necessary. A generation ago Gore was a divinity student who said he was repelled by the harsh realities of politics. Now he is the political combatant most likely to leave his victims feeling not just defeated but battered. He is also the one best able to change, purely through debate, the momentum of a political or policy contest.

- One week before Gore's televised 1993 debate with Ross Perot over the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Clinton Administration's prospects for getting NAFTA through Congress were chancy. Perot, with his talent for simplifying the economic arguments against NAFTA into punchy one-liners, was heavily favored to bring public opinion to his side. Ed Rollins, a consultant who had worked with Perot, predicted on TV, "He's going to kill Gore." One week after the debate many of the previously undecided Democrats in Congress had lined up in support of NAFTA, many of them citing Gore's performance as the decisive factor, and Perot was on the way down as a serious public figure.

- When Bob Dole chose Jack Kemp as his vice-presidential candidate, in August of 1996, Republicans hailed Kemp as a quick-tongued charmer who would not only buoy Dole but also appear in attractive contrast to the stolid Al Gore. Two months later Gore sailed through ninety minutes of an embarrassingly one-sided exchange with a flummoxed Kemp, effectively quashing Kemp's ability to lead a Dole comeback.

- Four months before this year's New Hampshire primary Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan endorsed Bill Bradley as the Democratic nominee, saying what many Democrats believed at the time: Gore was simply not electable. In a series of debates Gore repeatedly crushed Bradley—defining the topic, playing to the crowd, throwing Bradley off balance time and again. In October, a few weeks after Moynihan's endorsement, with polls showing Bradley ahead by eight points in New Hampshire, Gore and Bradley held their first face-to-face debate, at Dartmouth College. Gore lit into Bradley's health-care plan, saying that it was costly and would badly hurt the poor. Bradley, staying grandly above the fray, pooh-poohed the attacks. Within a week Bradley's lead in New Hampshire had disappeared. Gore won in New Hampshire and every other contested state.

Campaigns are not necessarily good vehicles for candidates to demonstrate the best of their true governing potential: that the elder George Bush could assemble and lead an international coalition; that Bill Clinton could cooperate with Republicans, bankers, and entrepreneurs to set the conditions for the longest-ever economic boom. But some of a President's essen-

tial character is always revealed in the campaign. The part that's revealed is the negative part: Nixon's vindictiveness toward enemies, Reagan's detachment from the details of decision-making, Clinton's evasiveness about truth. We can't be sure what will be best about Al Gore if he becomes President. But what will be worst is probably closely connected to the way he has learned to destroy opponents in debates.

GORE'S current climb to success as a debater began seven years ago, when he decided to take on Ross Perot over NAFTA. At the time, this decision seemed reckless. Although Perot's standing with the public had been diminished by his temporary withdrawal from the 1992 presidential race, a year before his debate with Gore he had received 19 percent of the

Debate has been the medium
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total popular vote for the presidency—half as many votes as President Bush. And the Gore-Perot debate was to be held on ground familiar to Perot—the CNN program *Larry King Live*, on which Perot had originally allowed himself to be "drafted" for a presidential run and which he regarded as a second home.

Perot had spent the early months of 1993 running ads in favor of deficit reduction, which had been his main cause in the presidential campaign. He had grown increasingly upset about NAFTA. With Pat Choate, an adviser who later became his running mate in the 1996 campaign, Perot wrote a manifesto called *Save Your Job, Save Our Country: Why NAFTA Must Be Stopped—Now!* It was published as a paperback original in mid-August of 1993 and reached No. 2 on the national best-seller list (behind Rush Limbaugh's *The Way Things Ought to Be*). As he had done with his deficit presentations, Perot spent his own money—at least \$5 million—to buy infomercials denouncing NAFTA. His argument was that free trade might make sense between fundamentally similar societies such as Canada and the United States, but that adopting it between countries on such different economic levels as the United States and Mexico would create a "giant sucking sound" as American jobs and industries zoomed southward. Former Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Bush had lined up beside Bill Clinton in the White House to say that the agreement should be passed. But in September, as the deadline for a vote drew near, NAFTA was, as Gore's longtime adviser Roy Neel recently told me, "on the ropes." National polls showed that more people were against the agreement than for it.

Perot and his associates were eager for a debate. They assumed that Perot would be matched against the likes of Mickey Kantor, who had been the chairman of the Clinton-Gore campaign and was now the U.S. trade representative. The Clinton NAFTA team tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade Lee Iacocca, who favored the agreement, to take on Perot in a battle of the CEOs. "We had no idea they'd give us Gore," Pat Choate, who helped Perot prepare for the encounter, told me.

Initially, the Administration also had no such idea. The very decision to support NAFTA, rather than abandon it as a George Bush legacy, had been divisive within the Administration. The Clinton advisers with close ties to organized labor, including George Stephanopoulos, Clinton's strategist, were unenthusiastic about the agreement to begin with. The advisers thought that if the Administration were to offer up anyone to Perot (who was not even an officeholder), it shouldn't be someone with the high visibility of the Vice President. In the early months of the Administration, Gore had proved to Clinton his earnestness, his willingness to work hard, and his mastery of substance—particularly on the merits of NAFTA. But his capability was more questionable in exactly the areas that a showdown with Perot would, it was believed, expose. Gore was considered a bad speaker, especially in settings where quickness and agility counted most—such as debates. "He's very intelligent, but he comes across a little slow," John White, a former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, told *Newsday* just before the debate. Because Bill Clinton had chosen not to run for President in 1988 and had picked Al Gore as his running mate in 1992, the two men had never faced each other in debate. But Clinton had watched Gore fail, as he viewed it, in debate against—of all people—Dan Quayle.

Disconcerted by Dan Quayle

QUAYLE'S 1992 advisers correctly regarded his 1988 encounter with Lloyd Bentsen ("You're no Jack Kennedy") as a disaster that must not be repeated. Four years later Quayle was rigorously prepared for the vice-presidential debate by a team determined to position him, psychologically and strategically, to outflank Al Gore. Among its members were Marilyn Quayle; William Kristol, then Quayle's chief of staff; Richard Porter, a lawyer and adviser; Al Hubbard, a businessman from Indiana who was the executive director of Quayle's Council on Competitiveness (and who now advises George W. Bush); Bill Gribbin, his congressional liaison; and Kenneth Adelman, the head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under Ronald Reagan. Using flash cards, briefing papers, and comments at extensive practice sessions, the team emphasized two tactics again and again.

One was not to discredit or disagree with—or even spend much time on—Al Gore but to attack Bill Clinton, through Gore, on what the team had identified as Clinton's greatest vulnerabilities: character, veracity, and trustworthiness. Whatever question the moderator asked, whatever the provocation

by Gore, Quayle was to turn the discussion to Clinton and ask the Republicans' main question: Are you willing to *trust* this man? A briefing memo from Adelman said, "Note: almost every policy area should give you the opportunity to raise the integrity/trust issue."

The other tactic was intended to take advantage of a little-understood truth about political debates: no matter what the rules are, there really are no rules. Quayle should do whatever was necessary to attack, confuse, disconcert, and even insult Gore. The immediate point was to make Gore look bad; the larger goals were to establish Quayle as a vigorous figure, not the famous "deer in the headlights" of the 1988 debacle with Bentsen, and to prevent Gore from doing anything to repulse the onslaught against Clinton. Warren Rudman, a senator from New Hampshire, who played Gore's role in practice debates, stressed the importance of keeping Gore off balance. Rudman argued that Gore's methodical intelligence equipped him to do his best when he could stick to his own plan; he was at his worst when forced to improvise or deviate from the script. A debate memo said that Quayle should pre-empt Gore's ability to control the discussion (and should react if necessary to "Gore's Zingers, Putdowns, Showboating, Acting Outraged") while keeping him off balance through intentional hyperactivity and provocations:

****The key: Be indignant and outraged in response.**

Look at him.

- "Get real, Al."
- "Lighten up, Al."
- "Take a breath, Al. Inhale. . . ."
- "You and Bill Clinton may think (family values, or whatever) is a joking matter, but we don't—and the American people don't."

Quayle performed exactly as his side hoped. (This debate also featured the heroic but spectacularly miscast James Bond Stockdale, the retired admiral and former Vietnam War POW who was Ross Perot's running mate. Stockdale opened with the memorable words "Who am I? Why am I here?" and responded to the moderator with such replies as "I'm out of ammunition on this" and "You know, I didn't have my hearing aid turned up. Tell me again.") Quayle started with an attack on Clinton's veracity, ended with another, and hit the trust theme at every step in between. He even turned an argument about Gore's recently published book about the environment into a slam at Clinton.

In this Quayle claimed, falsely, that Gore had said in his book *Earth in the Balance* that U.S. taxpayers should spend \$100 billion yearly to fix environmental problems in the rest of the world: "It's in your book, on page 304!" What that page actually says is that the United States should try to enlist Europe and Japan in a Marshall Plan-like effort to protect the world environment—and that *if* the United States made a commitment equivalent to its commitment under the original Marshall Plan, the cost would come to \$100 billion. ("Everyone understood it was a stretch," Kenneth Adelman says now



about the Quayle camp's thinking. "But on balance it seemed justified. And it had the advantage of suggesting that he had read the whole book and could remember the page number.") When Gore, spluttering, denied the charge (without specifying why it was wrong), Quayle looked with a "Can you believe it?" expression at the moderator, Hal Bruno, of ABC News. "You know, Hal," Quayle said, "I wanted to bring the Gore book tonight." Why? "Because I figured he was going to 'pull a Bill Clinton' on me, and he has." In an earlier disagreement during the debate Quayle had helpfully defined this phrase, which his team had conceived and urged him to use as often as possible in the debate: "You know what 'a Clinton' is? 'A

Clinton' is when . . . he says one thing one day and another thing the next day. You try to have both sides of the issues."

Gore mouthed "No, no" when Quayle criticized him or (more often) Clinton in the debate. But Quayle resolutely stuck to his message, in manner and content—always deliberately abrasive, always looking past Gore to the real target, Clinton. And Warren Rudman was proved right. Gore did not adapt in response. Not once in the ninety minutes of the debate did Gore try to counter Quayle's increasingly dismissive references to Clinton or to answer his baiting question: Why does this man deserve to be President? Instead he stuck to the agreed-on script, which called for emphasizing "It's the econ-



omy, stupid” issues and for casting George Bush as passive and out of touch. Quayle snarled away at Clinton, but Gore ended with a tepid summary beginning “Bill Clinton offers a new approach”—the closest he came to unambiguous praise of Clinton.

After the debate, the Clinton-Gore spinners presented it as another embarrassing performance by Dan Quayle and another sign of the Democratic team’s determination to let nothing distract it from the challenge of getting the economy moving again. Gore’s team rationalized his failure to defend Clinton as a necessary battlefield decision. “Do you want the headlines the next day to be ‘QUAYLE AND GORE SPAR OVER

CLINTON ETHICS’?” an adviser to Gore recently recalled thinking at the time. “On the spot he decided it was better to stay with a Bush attack than a Clinton defense.” Even now, nearly eight years later, Gore’s associates say he was just sticking to the master strategy that he and Clinton had worked out. “Al did not go into that debate with the principal objective to defend Bill Clinton personally,” Roy Neel, who had known Gore when both were newspapermen in Nashville, and who had joined his congressional staff in 1977, told me. “Nor did Clinton want him to do that.” But this perspective was not shared in the Clinton camp at the time. “He certainly wasn’t doing what Clinton wanted, in terms of defending Clinton,” David Gergen, who joined the Administration seven months after the debate, told me recently. Gergen says he recalls a residue of suspicion lingering because of Gore’s passivity against Quayle. “It would be fair to say that the governor was surprised and unhappy that night,” said one person who watched Clinton’s face turn red as Gore let Quayle slug away.

So in contemplating the NAFTA debate, the danger was obvious. If Quayle had caught Gore flat-footed, what might Perot do? To Clinton’s advisers the Quayle debate had made Gore look disloyal at worst and slow-witted at best. His was not the name they thought of first when it was time to face Perot. You don’t bring out a big gun if you think it might backfire.

Close In and Mean

JACK Quinn had seen Gore in other debates, and what he had seen made him think that Gore was just the man to take on Ross Perot.

Quinn was a friend of Gore’s who had been for many years a lawyer with the Washington, D.C., firm of Arnold & Porter. When Gore became Vice President, he named Quinn his chief of staff; Quinn later succeeded Abner Mikva as Bill Clinton’s White House counsel. During Gore’s first run for the presidency Quinn had been an influential issues adviser. When Gore had announced his candidacy, in April of 1987, he had presented himself as an all-purpose, forward-looking idealist. “We should establish a goal of having the lowest infant-mortality rate in the entire world,” he said in his opening speech. “We should establish the goal of having a job for every American who wants to work. We should have international efforts to combat health threats such as AIDS and Alzheimer’s.” And on and on it went, through a long list of goals. When a questioner asked which of these many goals would be his priority, Gore summed up: “The arms race and making America competitive and cleaning up our environment and creating the best education system in the world. Those are the four top.”

By the time he withdrew from the race, in April of 1988, after a defeat in the New York primary, Gore had repositioned and refocused himself as an aggressive, combative campaigner who could be the voice of the recently formed Democratic Leadership Council—the candidate who could move the party back to the pro-defense, strong-America, anti-crime, pro-fam-

ily center, where it could win. Along with Roy Neel and Bruce Reed, a young speechwriter in Gore's Senate office, Jack Quinn played an important part in this shift. Gore adopted an assertive demeanor designed to pressure the other candidates and to get him noticed for his toughness. "Al was about the last one into the race," Roy Neel says. "The debate strategy was a way to go hard at the other opponents and try to get in the first tier."

The first successful test of the strategy took place at a debate in Des Moines, Iowa, in the fall of 1987. The other Democratic candidates, some with qualifications, supported a proposed nuclear freeze. Gore opposed it. "None of the other guys seemed to have thought about global or national security in a thorough way," Neel told me. "So when he got the question at the debate, he was primed. With this big, sweeping gesture he said, 'All of my opponents have gone mindlessly and in lockstep in supporting this dangerous scheme,' and so forth. Those other guys were caught completely off guard. He nailed them."

"The next day *The Des Moines Register* wrote it exactly as we wanted it. We caught total hell from the Democratic establishment. But it basically got Al into the race—and it provided a reinforcement for working really hard on these debates. It made the debates a centerpiece of his message, not just the substantive message but the impression that he was a fighter."

Before he withdrew from the 1988 campaign, Gore went through more than two dozen debates. He held preparation and practice sessions before every one of them. Jack Quinn time and again saw Gore's ability to fight close in and mean.

By 1993, though, when Gore was Vice President and Quinn was his chief of staff, memories of Gore's prowess had been

Gore has the discipline to master enough data to exploit an opponent's essential weakness and the ruthlessness to frame facts to a devastating effect.

blurred by his performance in the Quayle debate and by his four preceding years in the Senate, where the prevailing style is indirect and woolly—swathed in layers of "my distinguished colleague" and short on zingers and pithy remarks. When a senator speaks, there are usually no time limits. This has a predictable effect. The more years a person spends in the Senate, the worse an orator he is likely to seem to any audience outside the Senate chamber. Bob Dole is a case in point. Career senators who remain effective short-form speakers generally developed their habits somewhere else. Former Senator Dale Bumpers, of Arkansas, for example, was a trial attorney from his mid-twenties through his mid-forties.

Gore certainly had his share of bad senatorial habits. But before entering the Senate, in 1985, he had spent eight years in the House. There he had developed the skills needed for success in that very different environment—namely, the *Crossfire*-style ability to get the point across quickly and, if at all possible, to needle the opponent while doing so. The most noticeable representatives of recent years include Newt Gingrich, Tom DeLay, Dick Armey, Barney Frank, Charles Rangel, and the pre-senatorial Chuck Schumer. Politicians like these feel right at home on TV and radio argue-talk shows, because the modern House rewards talk-show behavior. When he was in the House, Gore adapted successfully to its requirements—learning how to ask of a hearing witness a confrontational question that would seem interesting enough for the evening news; learning to be comfortable with face-to-face disagreement that in the Senate would be considered impolite.

The more Gore played by House rules during the 1988 Democratic debates, the more attention he got. Like the House, the debates featured too many participants competing for too little time. Initially there were seven contenders—"the seven dwarfs" to the press: Gore, Michael Dukakis, Gary Hart, Paul Simon, Jesse Jackson, Bruce Babbitt, and Dick Gephardt. (In 1987 Gary Hart was briefly out of the race and Joe Biden was briefly in, still leaving a field of seven.) Each candidate struggled for time on camera while a debate was under way and for the even scarcer resource of recap coverage on the evening news. As with House debates, these large-scale encounters rewarded the person who was willing to initiate personal confrontation, who could boil down his argument to a slogan, and who was able to present a caricature of an opponent's views that was just short of an easily exposed lie. In the early debates Gore's main opponent was Gephardt, who had a surge in the Iowa caucus. Later Gore and everyone else aimed at Dukakis, to keep him from wrapping up the race.

In one particular debate Gore demonstrated his ability to inflict deliberate damage. This debate took place on February 18, 1988, at Southern Methodist University, in Dallas. By then, three weeks before the "Super Tuesday" wave of mainly southern primaries, Dukakis was moving ahead of the pack, and Gore and Gephardt had each identified the other as the chief obstacle to hanging in as No. 2. Gephardt's main strength was his appeal to the traditional Democratic little man on themes of trade policy and unfair tax policy. His main weakness was the suspicion that he had developed his views recently and opportunistically to fill the populist gap. "Gephardt still had the best operation in the South, so Al had to go at him to send a signal to his southern supporters," Roy Neel told me. "Much of the support for Gephardt was from people who were concerned about Dukakis, so to steal that Gore had to take shots effectively at Dukakis." Neel, Jack Quinn, and others in the campaign had discussed Gore's talent for identifying and then exploiting an opponent's most vulnerable spot.

Gore had been asked a question about the Democrats' habit of pandering to interest groups—making anti-free-trade speech-



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es to unions, offering support to farmers. In reply, Gore devoted one sentence to the question itself. Now that Bruce Babbitt had dropped out of the race, he said, he was the only remaining Democrat who was not pandering in support of a certain farm bill. Then he turned his gaze from the questioner to look straight at Gephardt, a few feet away, and delivered the prepared attack. "Standing up to pressure is something the next President is going to have to do," he began. "I'm gonna lay it on the line here, Dick. Now, look, you voted against the minimum wage every time you had a chance to in the Congress. If you had your vote, it would still be two dollars and thirty cents an hour. Now you say you're for it. You voted against the Department of Education. Now you say you're for it. You voted for tuition tax credits. Now you say you're against it. You voted for Reaganomics. Now you say—well, where are you this week on Reaganomics? I'm not sure."

[*The camera cuts to Gephardt, who is looking daggers at Gore. Gore keeps going.*] "Even on the subject that's probably the most difficult issue in this entire campaign, the subject of abortion, where everybody here has given it a lot of thought, it's a difficult issue, I don't know why you did a hundred-and-eighty-degree reversal on that issue. But the fact is you did. [*The camera again cuts to Gephardt, who transparently is thinking 'I hate you.'*] And the next President of the United States has to be someone the American people can believe will stay with his convictions, and if pressure comes from Gorbachev, from domestic interest groups, from wherever the pressure comes, you've gotta be willing to stand your ground and be consistent."

With this delivered, Gore stared into the camera. His jaw muscles kept flexing after he had finished. Gephardt didn't have—or, at least, didn't seize—a chance to speak for several minutes. If he had been Gore's kind of House combatant, he would have popped up and said, "May I answer that? Mr. Moderator, this calls for a reply!" (Though he came to the House the same year Gore did, Gephardt behaves like a figure from the pre-TV version of House demeanor; he is visibly uncomfortable with direct, in-person confrontation.) The attack was particularly galling because Gore's own views on abortion had, like Gephardt's, changed since his first years in the House. But Gephardt waited his proper turn. When next asked a question, about energy policy, he dealt with it in a few words. Then he turned to Gore: "While we're on the subject, Al [*icy emphasis*], I enjoyed your lecture on consistency, but you know the oil import fee is a place where I think you've been inconsistent. You voted against it every time, now you say, when you're in Texas you say that you would consider it as a way to deal with the budget. [*Camera on Gore, who is turning his head from side to side and miming "No, no."*] So when you make a lecture on consistency, maybe you'd better look at your own record first. [*Jerry Springer-like sounds of "Oooooohhh!" from the crowd.*] When you started this race, you decided you needed a southern political strategy. So you decided that you'd better move to the right on defense and

a lot of other issues. And lately you've been sounding more like Al Haig than Al Gore." Gore [*interrupting*]: "That line sounds more like Richard Nixon than Richard Gephardt."

"It was just devastating," Paul Begala, who was working then for Gephardt, told me recently. "Gore turned to him and seized on Dick's greatest perceived weakness, that he flip-flopped around on issues, and gutted him with a perfectly crafted sound bite. It was really very tough, but not across the line of being unfair. It was right up to that line, because it was so personal, and that was because of the way he delivered it." "What hurt Gephardt so badly in 1988 was that he had no money," Robert Shrum, who is advising Gore now but was on Gephardt's staff at the time, told me. "But that debate hurt too." Gore's campaign excerpted his blast at Gephardt and ran it as a TV ad, complete with the cutaways to an abashed Gephardt. Begala says, "It looked like a completely fair attack, because the guy was right there listening, and there was nothing much to say."

Dispatching Gephardt was important, but the real target was Dukakis. Gore had gone after him in the Dallas debate even before confronting Gephardt. Practically the first words out of Gore's mouth that evening were a "comment" on a preceding answer by Dukakis, in a form designed both to create doubts in the minds of the audience about Dukakis's credentials and to fluster Dukakis. Gore was asked about a hostage situation in Lebanon. He spent a few seconds on that subject and then said, "I'd like to comment on the responses we've heard."



The only response he could mean was one by Dukakis.

Gore: "I think it's awfully important to have a President who can deal from a position of strength and a President experienced in foreign policy. We're not just selecting a manager of the federal bureaucracy. [*Get it, Mike?*] We're selecting a President of the United States in this election. Now, I listened to Mike talk, and it sounds a little bit different from what he said in Iowa about a week ago, on the eve of the caucuses there, when he implied that it would be all right to have a Soviet client state established in Central America . . ."

Dukakis [*starting to splutter*]: "I never said that—I'm not going to—sorry, sorry—I'm not going—"

Gore [*plowing ahead*]: "And if a President of the United States made a statement like that in office, it could have catastrophic consequences—"

Dukakis [*appealing to Roger Mudd, the moderator*]: "Roger! I'm not going to sit here and listen to that. I never said that, Al! I never implied it—" [*Dukakis is really angry, at least for him.*]

Gore [*serene, acting out "There he goes again!"*]: "Well, that's the way it was reported, and I read the transcript, and what you said is if they had offensive missiles there, offensive weapons, then you wouldn't tolerate that, but if they didn't, then a Soviet client state might be just fine—"

Dukakis: "I never, ever said that! Please get your facts straight."

Mudd: "Senator, the governor has denied it."

Dukakis: "If you're going to be President of the United States, you'd better be accurate. That's the first thing you better be."

Viewers watching the debate might well have drawn two conclusions: Gore was the tough guy on foreign policy, and Dukakis had said something questionable and possibly unpatriotic about the Soviets and Central America. Surely a United States senator would not simply invent such an accusation. If Dukakis sounded so touchy, Gore must have hit a nerve.

If Gore had not wholly invented the accusation, he had taken large interpretive liberties. Earlier that month Dukakis had been quoted as saying that the Monroe Doctrine had been superseded by the treaty establishing the Organization of American States and other agreements. This could be interpreted as meaning that the United States should be more careful about throwing its weight around in the Americas, which in turn could mean "tolerating" regimes it did not like. But Gore did not need to rely on these interpretations, because he had heard Dukakis directly address the question. Two months earlier, at a debate in Washington, D.C., Tom Brokaw had asked Dukakis, "If there is a Soviet satellite state in Central America, another Cuba, and it's called Nicaragua, would that bother you?" Dukakis replied, "It would bother me. It would depend on whether or not it had offensive weapons. If it does, we have a perfect right to go in with our partners in the American community and take the steps we have a perfect right to take."

The "would" in "It would bother me" was slightly swal-

lowed, so it could conceivably have been heard as "wouldn't." But Gore was five feet away as Dukakis said these words, and he could hardly have misunderstood Dukakis's point. In the second part of the answer Dukakis was clearly, if implicitly, referring not to the issue of whether a Soviet state in Central America would "bother" him but to the circumstances that would justify taking action. Was this a distortion? "It was an *opening*," Roy Neel told me. "For us it showed a kind of weak-headed thinking about these things. Basically we wanted to put Dukakis on the defensive and see if he could take that kind of treatment." All the major papers reported the following day that Gore had been "aggressive" and had launched sharp criticisms of Gephardt and Dukakis. Most also reported Dukakis's annoyed denial. But there was no time to go back and make clear that the denial was justified.

Making Perot Lose It

THIS was the debater Jack Quinn had seen in action: one with the discipline to master enough data to exploit an opponent's essential weakness and the ruthlessness to frame—or distort—facts in an argument of devastating effect. The Clintonites might have lost sight of this Gore because of the 1992 debate with Quayle, but Quinn was confident now, one year later, that the same tough fighter could apply the same tough tactics to Ross Perot. Quinn made the case to Gore, who after some hesitation agreed. Gore then went to the President, who had enough confidence in Gore's mastery of the substance of NAFTA to think that his taking part in the debate made sense.

When Perot and his associates learned that instead of, say, the U.S. trade representative they would have a crack at Al Gore, they were amazed—"and ecstatic," Pat Choate recently told me. They immediately accepted the idea and began negotiating over specifics. Pat Choate and Russell Verney, representing Perot, suggested a big public forum, perhaps in Florida or wherever else Gore might prefer. The White House was not interested; it wanted to avoid any sort of town-hall setting, which it feared might be full of cheering Perot partisans. David Gergen, who had recently supplanted George Stephanopoulos in directing Clinton's communications efforts, called Ross Perot at home early one morning. What about having the discussion on his old friend Larry King's talk show on CNN? Tom Johnson, the head of CNN, had already, and enthusiastically, okayed the idea. Perot agreed, expecting the kind of comfortable forum he had enjoyed there before.

This did not turn out to be purely the discussion of jobs and "sucking sounds" that Perot and his team had in mind. Instead it was a contest defined by Gore's ability to find and exploit an opponent's vulnerability. "What is most in character for him is his thoroughness in study," says Elaine Kamarck, who was a senior member of Gore's vice-presidential policy staff at the time of the Perot debate. "On the basis of analysis, he believes he can identify the one essential weakness in the other party—

and then hammer at that point.” In hindsight it may not sound like an act of genius for the Gore team to have concluded that Perot’s essential weakness was his temperament; Dana Carvey’s Perot snarling “Kin ah finish?” was already a fixture on *Saturday Night Live*. But there was genius, or at least cunning, in the decision to prepare Gore to push Perot’s flaw to the breaking point—to stake the debate on Gore’s ability to make Perot lose his temper. “If you’re dealing with a hothead, you make him mad,” Greg Simon, a longtime Gore aide who was then Gore’s domestic-policy adviser and part of the team that prepared him for the debate, told me. “You’ve got a crazy man, you make him show it.”

Perot’s side cruised toward the discussion as if it would be another episode of the Ross-and-Larry mutual-admiration show. Perot had spent the preceding three months touring the country to speak about NAFTA. He had his charts; he had his arguments; he constantly advertised the fact that he had read the full NAFTA draft. Gore, meanwhile, spent the two weeks before the debate studying Perot’s bearing and his character, while relying on his staff to dig up the goods on Perot’s past. “He is at his best if he is confident that *every* possibility has been covered,” Lorraine Voles, his former press secretary, told me. “If you can tell him Greg is covering the speeches and Jack is looking at the videos and the whole team is giving him everything he is going to need, then he’ll feel secure and not worry that someone has forgotten to dig up an old speech.” At Gore’s request his staff prepared an omnibus edition of Perot’s speeches, statements, and interviews about NAFTA, and also tapes of Perot in action. Gore studied them on his own and then assembled a team at the Naval Observatory—the Vice President’s official residence—for a formal mock debate.

The team included Mike Synar, a congressman from Oklahoma, who took Perot’s role in the debate; Mark Gearan, the manager of Gore’s 1992 campaign and later the director of the Peace Corps, who played Larry King (and who, with his smooth choirboy face, looked as unlike King as can be imagined); Paul Begala, who after working for Gephardt had become a White House political counselor; David Gergen; Roy Neel; Jack Quinn, who was known within the White House as the man who would take either the blame or the credit for the Gore-Perot debate, depending on how it turned out; Greg Simon; Elaine Kamarck; Gene Sperling, from the White House economic-policy staff; Marla Romash, then Gore’s press secretary; Bob Squier, a veteran Democratic consultant who could be relied on to steady Gore and give him confidence before big performances; and Tom Downey, a close friend of Gore’s who had won a congressional seat from Long Island when he was twenty-five, in 1974, but had just lost his seat in the 1992 election.

Several days before the scheduled debate the team gathered at the Naval Observatory, around a huge table. As usual when Gore was preparing for a debate, there was informal banter—what Paul Begala, using baseball lingo for fast practice, calls “playing pepper,” in which Gore and his associates tossed

questions and sound bites back and forth to develop his debating reflexes and find the sharpest way to make a point. This time Gore didn’t complete the mock debate, ending it when he grew testy about what he considered heavy-handed programming by his advisers. Gore’s attitude toward preparation is more selective than his reputation for plodding diligence might suggest. When the normal circumstances of his working life keep him up-to-date on issues—and, in his view, sharp about the ways to discuss them—he feels it is needless to spend hours demonstrating that he knows what he knows. “You know, I’ve *done this before*, guys,” he said in the middle of yet another pitch about how he should handle questions from King and Perot, according to an adviser who was present. “I was a newspaperman for years. I used to have congressional investigations and subcommittees. I know what I’m doing.”

What Gore really wanted to talk about was how to get at Perot. Everyone knew that Perot loved charts. “He’s got every kind of chart,” Greg Simon said to me recently. “The price of eggs matched to the number of seats on an airplane.” Sperling was in charge of matching Perot chart for chart, especially to show that Mexico could be a significant market for U.S. goods. Simon, Neel, Quinn, and others pooled ideas about the best ways to make Perot lose his composure.

Their starting point was that Perot was like an overbearing grandfather. “He’ll be fine as long as everybody sits there and listens to him,” Simon said. “But if you start interrupting him, he’ll lose it.” Perot, a graduate of the Naval Academy, was extremely proud of his image as a self-sacrificing patriot. Several aides reasoned that if Gore could find a way to gibe at or raise doubts about that reputation, Perot would be unable to contain himself. Perot had virtually no experience with being treated disrespectfully, least of all in the friendly confines of Larry King’s studio.

Mike Synar, Perot for a Day, had mastered the anti-NAFTA arguments, but no one could act as flappable as the real Perot. “This was really good, because the Vice President had to work harder at it,” Greg Simon told me. “You didn’t want to start by firing right at [Perot], because people would then say he had an excuse to get mad. You just wanted to drop in those little depth charges and five minutes later they would go off. Gore is an expert in knowing how to do that. He is very good at the offhand annoying comment.”

There was one particularly annoying gambit Gore had in mind. During the 1988 campaign he had attacked Dick Gephardt’s trade proposals by linking them to the Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930, which helped turn a stock-market panic into a worldwide depression. This was a hoary but nonetheless effective way to discredit a political position—a milder equivalent of Clarence Thomas’s reference to a hostile committee hearing as a “high-tech lynching.” The world economy in 1988 was different in every way from that of 1930; high tariffs did bring on the Depression, but in the 1950s and the 1960s high tariffs coexisted with trade and growth. Never mind. The important thing was that Gore knew that Perot would not be able

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to stand being compared to Reed Smoot and Willis Hawley.

Reading an article on foreign policy, Gore had come across an old photo of Smoot and Hawley. The very morning of the debate Gore told Greg Simon about the picture and said that he wanted to have a framed copy of it by that evening, to hand to Perot. Simon's assistant, Kristin Schneeman, had previously worked as a documentary-film researcher. She helped to track down the picture at the Bettmann Archive and asked for a copy, pronto. A Gore supporter living in New York dashed to Bettmann, got the print, and carried it onto the next flight to Washington. Schneeman shopped for a suitable frame and rushed to the television studio, where she met the courier. Just

“You just wanted to drop in those little depth charges,” one adviser said. “Gore is an expert. . . . very good at the offhand annoying comment.”

before Gore walked into the studio, his assistants handed him this prop. Bob Squier talked to Gore shortly before he went in: You're going to be great, just follow your instincts. Another staff member thought that the scene was like a trainer talking soothingly to a thoroughbred in the tense moments before a race.

Following the plan, less than five minutes into the debate Gore was deliberately interrupting Perot. As Perot began to list his complaints about NAFTA, Gore jumped in. “How would you change it?”

Perot: “Very simply, I would go back, and study—first, we look at this, it doesn't work—”

Gore [*interrupting*]: “Well, what specific changes would you make in it?”

Perot [*crabby*]: “I can't unless you let me finish, I can't answer your question. Now, you asked me, and I'm trying to tell you.”

Gore: “Well, you brought your charts tonight, so I want to know what specific changes you would like to make in the treaty.”

Perot: “How can I answer if you keep interrupting me?”

Gore [*this part of the mission complete*]: “Go ahead.”

Thirty seconds later, as Perot paused for breath, Gore was saying, “Okay, can I respond now?”—further flustering Perot and launching the next attack. “We've had a test of [Perot's] theory,” Gore began. Perot squawked, and Larry King asked, “When?” Gore continued, employing a super-slow and pedantic style of emphasis that is irritating in itself. “In 1930, when the proposal by Mr. . . . *Smoot* and Mr. . . . *Hawley* was to raise tariffs across the board to protect our workers. And I brought some pictures too. This is a picture of Mr. Smoot and Mr. . . .

Hawley. They look like pretty good . . . *fellas*. They sounded reasonable at the time. A lot of people . . . *believed* them. The Congress passed the . . . *Smoot . . . Hawley . . . protection* bill. He [*gesturing at Perot*] wants to raise tariffs on . . . *Mexico*.”

At this point it seemed only fitting—practically polite—to give Perot an attractive remembrance of his intellectual heritage. Gore offered the framed photograph with a thin smile. Perot took it, glowered at it, and slammed it face-down on the desk. The debate still had seventy-five minutes to run, but the competitive part was over. By giving in to anger, Perot had defeated himself. “The only surprise was how well Perot lived up to our expectations,” Elaine Kamarck told me. “He got mad and stayed mad.”

“The debate was a real turnaround for Gore with the Clinton team,” David Gergen told me recently. “He turned all the skeptics into believers. And the President was doing handstands. I think it was extremely important for their relationship.”

Scenes From Debate Camp

ON the strength of his performance against Ross Perot, Gore did not have to persuade anyone that it would be a good idea for him to take on Jack Kemp in 1996. But the problems he faced in preparing for that debate were entirely different.

The team working with Gore was largely the same one that had helped him three years before. David Gergen had gone on to other pursuits, but Jack Quinn, Greg Simon, and Elaine Kamarck were still closely involved. So were Gene Sperling, Tom Downey, Paul Begala, and Bob Squier. Leon Fuerth, Gore's longtime adviser on foreign policy, played a role, as did Mark Penn, a pollster. The two people officially responsible for organizing Gore's debate-prep effort were Andrew Cuomo, then an assistant secretary at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (and now the Secretary), and Ron Klain, who had served in various roles on the President's and Vice President's staffs and became staff director of the Democratic caucus in the Senate in 1995.

In Jack Kemp the debate team feared that it might encounter Gore's most formidable opponent. Kemp had a reputation for charming audiences. His campaign, which favored Reagan-style supply-side tax cuts, was in spirit even more optimistic than Reagan's, because Kemp's fiscal optimism was not darkened by the need for simultaneous struggle against the Soviet threat. When critics tried to show that this or that tax proposal could never pay for itself, Kemp used Reagan's “There you go again!” strategy, suggesting that it was small-minded and penny-pinching to look only at the ledger books when what really mattered was the boundless opportunity of America's tomorrow. “We knew that if we didn't keep him off balance, he could just soar with his optimistic rhetoric,” Gene Sperling, who briefed Gore on economic policy before the debate, told me. “At his best he had that wonderful optimism.” Kemp was fit and handsome, still carried himself like an ath-

lete, and indeed missed no opportunity to remind audiences of his impressive record on the football field.

What Gore had learned to do so well—irritate an opponent to make him show his ugly side—would probably not work with Kemp. Kemp had shown no inclination to blow his top; if cornered on specifics, he just started talking generalities, like Reagan. His most obvious weakness seemed to be his differences—ideological, intellectual, emotional—with Bob Dole. Practically until the moment Dole chose Kemp as his running mate, the two men had represented opposite strands of Republicanism—Dole fretting about the deficit and studying the sky for rain, Kemp promising sunshine and surpluses if only taxes would go away. Much as Quayle had used his vice-presidential debate mainly to attack the presidential nominee, so Gore's team decided that its job was not to hurt Kemp but to embrace him and apply his own criticisms to his temporary ally, Bob Dole.

GORE'S team also tried to be realistic about his vulnerabilities. Everyone around him recognized how pompous he could sound—particularly after his several years of isolation in the White House. A few of his associates, mainly Bob Squier and Gore's longtime associate Carter Eskew, and also Gore's eldest daughter, Karenna, could tell him so, in private. Even as a senator Gore had shown a tendency to sound condescendingly professorial when discussing what he liked to consider his fields of expertise—technology, the environment, arms control. One man who observed Gore closely during the 1988 campaign says that Gore adopted this patronizing tone not when he was sure of his subject matter but rather when he was still trying to master it—“suddenly using all kinds of arcane terms as if he was teaching you about them.”

When Gore had been actively campaigning four years earlier, he could be kidded or jostled out of his starchiness—and out of the maddeningly pedantic speech pattern in which he pauses for agonizing intervals before any . . . *complicated* word, and sounds as if he has to slow down for an audience of dullards. Steven Pinker, a cognitive scientist from MIT, says this style of speech is known as “motherese,” after the way in which parents talk to children. It is also the way native speakers of a language address foreigners, and the way doctors and nurses often address patients, especially the elderly. Except when used with babies, it is grating because of its inherent condescension.

Roy Neel, who knew Gore before he entered politics, says that this speaking style stems not from arrogance but from perfectionism: “I think this is part of an overall style of communication that has evolved since he got into public life. He has an intense concern that what he says is crystal clear and precise. Al has wanted to be so damned sure that what he says is perfectly articulated that it could come across in a stilted way.” An incumbent Vice President, who spends much of his time listening attentively to the President and the rest being listened to by respectful crowds and staff members, is like an

athlete on a long layoff. His reflexes slow and his bad habits can go unchecked.

Gore's time away from the road also dulled what his associates considered a crucial (if carefully husbanded) asset: his sly, quick wit. Everyone who has worked closely with Gore says the rapier remark is noticeable in his private discourse: he'll use it to punctuate and lighten a stretch of plodding, serious policy talk. Of the dozen or so aides who have made this point to me, none has been able to offer anything so vulgar as a specific example. Fortunately, one exists on the public record. During the 1988 campaign Gore and Jesse Jackson were elbowing each other for the mantle of the “real” southern candidate. In a debate at the Kennedy Center, in Washington, D.C., Jackson prefaced a question to Gore with a reminder that he, Jackson, actually was from the South. “South Chicago?” Gore sneaked in with a grin. It took Jackson a second—but then he erupted in laughter, as did the crowd, and reached out to shake Gore's hand with a “Good one!” expression.

The remedy decided on was Debate Camp. The encounter with Kemp was scheduled for October 9, 1996, in St. Petersburg, Florida. For most of the previous week Gore and several dozen advisers moved to the Mote Marine Laboratory, on the outskirts of Sarasota, to get their man in tip-top physical, intellectual, psychological, and rhetorical shape. The assistants who were on the government payroll rather than the campaign staff were careful to use vacation time while at camp.

As organized by Andrew Cuomo and Ron Klain, the camp was analogous to a heavyweight boxer's encampment in the Poconos before a title bout in Atlantic City. One staff member who was there describes Gore retrospectively as “Champ.” At the direction of Tipper and Karenna, Champ had a wholesome training table: lots of fruits and vegetables, no Clinton-



style chips and junk food. In the mornings he would hit the light and heavy bags, going through the issues with his domestic-policy and foreign-policy advisers. (These were the familiar crowd: Fuerth, Sperling, Squier, Kamarck, Stephanopoulos, Begala, Penn, Voles. An addition was Gore's speechwriter, Dan Pink.) In the afternoon he'd take a look at some of the lab's environmental exhibits or shoot baskets at the hoop that had been brought right into the practice-debate hall. (Sports moved indoors when Tropical Storm Josephine hit the area, midway through camp.) One afternoon Gore was playing an increasingly intense pickup game with his aides, many in their twenties and thirties (he was nearly fifty). As the teams split up into Shirts and Skins, Gore, a Skin, revealed an impressively fit and muscular torso. George Stephanopoulos said to Gene Sperling, "I guess this is his subtle way of saying, 'You guys think you're so cool, but try to look this way in a dozen years.'"

Then, in the evening, after a healthful dinner, the climax of the day: a full-scale mock debate between Gore and his favored, most demanding sparring partner—Tom Downey. The debate took place on a stage exactly like the real one in St. Petersburg, at lecterns the height of the real ones, with a moderator, Ron Klain, sitting where the real moderator would sit, and with Gore and Downey both dressed in suits. The debate started and ended on the same schedule as the real one, so that Gore's body clock would be properly set.

Ron Klain liked and respected Downey, but he was known to be skeptical that a former politician could suppress his ego enough to be an effective sparring partner. Klain and others were therefore delighted and relieved by Downey's ability to re-create Jack Kemp's mannerisms, arguments, and spirit. "Every time he would come back not with the best response to Gore but the best *Kemp* response to Gore," one participant recalls. "This is what made the sessions so successful."

In contrast, at his training camp Jack Kemp had the Republican senator Judd Gregg playing Gore in mock debates—and playing him like a cartoon liberal who was extreme about the environment, who yearned for taxes and big government, and who walked right into Kemp's traps.

Even before Debate Camp began, Dan Pink and other aides had reviewed hours of tapes of Kemp giving his stump speech, and they felt they had identified the areas that would require specific planning and preparation. Although Kemp could sometimes be glib and underprepared, at his best he had a jock bravado that audiences loved. Gore needed to find a way to overcome that charm and block those metaphors. In a late-afternoon discussion Karenna Gore proposed that in his comments at the beginning of the debate her father should offer Kemp a deal: if Kemp would hold off on the gridiron allusions, he would agree not to deploy his amusing stories about chlorofluorocarbons. Gore's delivery should be self-deprecatory and deadpan.

For the tax-cut plan as a whole Gore's strategy was to hit two points whenever he could. One was a reminder that Gore

wasn't the only person to criticize Bob Dole's tax plan. Jack Kemp had criticized it too—until shortly before Dole chose him as his running mate. The other was a warning about the risks of cutting taxes too much. Every time Gore discussed the Dole-Kemp proposal, he was supposed to call it a "risky tax scheme" and say that it would "blow a hole in the deficit" and endanger "Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment." In contrast, the Democrats had a "positive plan" that would balance the budget and protect these four areas.

Gore had a specific way in which he liked to take in data and prepare debate themes. He sketched out ideas and arguments—points Kemp might make, and his possible responses—on large pads of paper, placed on easels. He would rip off pages as he came up with more and more refined versions of his arguments; when he was satisfied, he would hand the sheets to his staff. (He now has an electronic "whiteboard" in his office, which prints out replicas of what he has written.) "He had an exact formulation that he liked in his briefings," Gene Sperling told me. "He'd tell us, This is how I like to get it: for each issue, the three main points, and the ten best supporting facts, and the best reply, and so on. It's very rewarding to do things the way he says, because once he has it how he likes it, he *owns* the information. It was impressive."

When Debate Camp was over, the participants took away souvenir T-shirts that read

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 "MOAT" MARINE LABORATORY, SARASOTA FL
 4 DAYS
 75 CHARTS
 18 ANECDOTES
 22 METAPHORS
 200 QUESTIONS
 AND 1 HURRICANE

According to Plan

THE training paid off. In the ninety minutes of the real debate Gore executed his strategy so relentlessly that the only surprise for his team was how weak a showing the real Kemp made. "Where's Downey?" Andrew Cuomo began calling in the green room halfway through the debate. "Suit up Downey! This guy can't hack it!"

The debate's sole questioner was Jim Lehrer. Candidates increasingly prefer single-moderator debates; journalists on a panel of questioners compete for air time and feel pressure to outdo one another with more-elaborate and nastier questions. Lehrer's opening question invited Kemp to lay out his main debating points: In ninety seconds, what would he say were the main personal and ethical differences between his candidate and Bill Clinton? In his practice debates against Downey, Gore had placed tremendous emphasis on honing his standard answers so that they would exactly fit the allotted time. Downey had encouraged Gore in this, saying that a debater who chronically ran long, forcing the moderator to say "You're over



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time, please wrap up,” looked sloppy and unprepared. Gore’s team suspected that Kemp would not be disciplined about shrinking his answers to the proper time, making Gore seem all the sharper. Their suspicions proved to be correct. Within the first few minutes of the debate, when Kemp was asked to make a ninety-second statement and Gore to make a sixty-second reply, the audience saw the difference between a candidate trying to breeze through on natural charm and one carrying out a plan.

Kemp [*smiling and relaxed, the football captain addressing the pep rally*]: “Ninety seconds? I can’t clear my throat in ninety seconds! [*No laughs from audience. Bad start.*] Jim, Bob Dole and myself do not see Al Gore and Bill Clinton as our enemy. We see them as our opponents. It’s the greatest democracy in the world.”

Kemp continued in similar off-the-cuff style until, noticing that his ninety seconds were about to run out, he concluded with this feeble appeal:

“Abraham Lincoln put it best when he said you serve your party best by serving the nation first. And I can’t think of a better way of serving this nation in 1996 than by electing Bob Dole the President of the United States of America. . . . Ultimately [we] leave it to the American people to make up their minds about who should be the leader of this country into the twenty-first century.”

Gore [*very polite, not interrupting, but knowing exactly what he has to say and how long he has to say it*]: “I’d like to thank the people of St. Petersburg for being such wonderful hosts. . . . And I would like to thank Jack Kemp for the answer that he just gave. [*No kidding!*] I think we have an opportunity tonight to have a positive debate about this country’s future. I’d like to start by offering you a deal, Jack. If you won’t use any . . . *football stories*, I won’t tell any of my warm and hu-

morous stories about . . . chlorofluorocarbon abatement.” [*Deliberately wooden expression, delayed small laugh from crowd, but does the job. Only two football references in the rest of the debate.*]

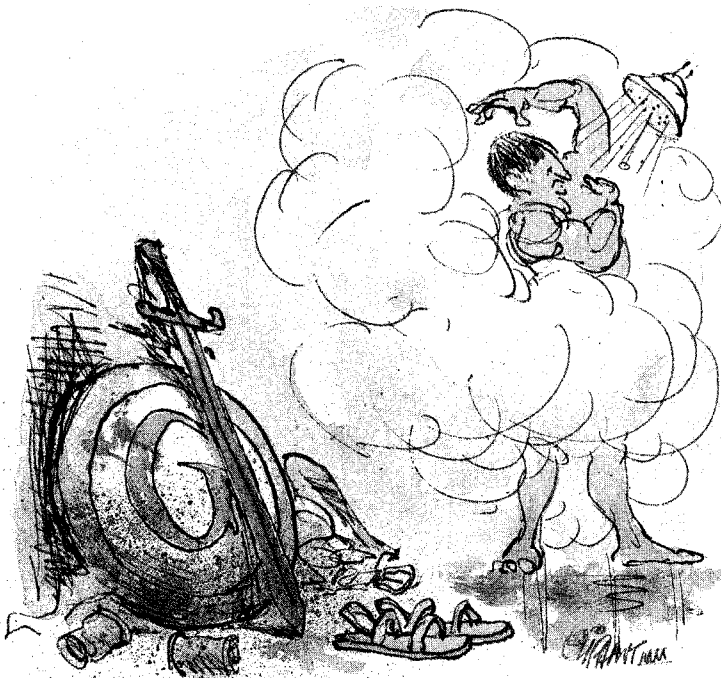
Kemp [*too eager to please*]: “It’s a deal.”

Gore [*laying out the plans for the rest of the evening*]: “What I do want to talk about tonight is Bill Clinton’s *positive plan* for America’s future. We have a plan to *balance the budget* while *protecting Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment*. Creating millions of new jobs, including one million new jobs in America’s inner cities. I’m excited about the chance to talk about this plan and even more excited about the chance to work on it if you the people of this country will give Bill Clinton and me the privilege of doing so for four more years.”

Half a dozen more times in the debate Gore mentioned fixedly the *positive plan* that would *balance the budget* while protecting the big four: *Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment*. (“Don’t give him a line if you don’t want him to use it,” one of Gore’s advisers told me.) The only theme Gore emphasized more often than his own *positive plan* was the *risky tax scheme* from the other side. He repeated this like a catechism during the debate. “The press was all over us for repetitiveness, but it was a good strategy,” Paul Begala says. “In the flow of debate it may seem redundant—but it will be cut up by news editors after that, and this way the bites will all have your central theme.”

Gore had no single climactic moment in the debate, nothing comparable to handing Perot the Smoot-Hawley picture or wheeling to confront Dick Gephardt. He didn’t need one; Kemp simply failed to fight back.

Gore’s team introduced one other approach in that debate, which has heavily influenced his rhetorical behavior this year. During Debate Camp, Andrew Cuomo searched for ways to make the Vice President’s points seem more vivid and human. Why not tie them to actual human beings? In his first State of the Union address Ronald Reagan had pioneered what came to be called the “Lenny Skutnik moment”—the time when the President would point to a guest sitting next to the First Lady, in the balcony, and explain how this citizen symbolized some important national theme. (Skutnik had rescued a victim of the 1982 Air Florida jetliner crash from the ice-covered Potomac River.) Since then the Lenny Skutnik moment had become obligatory in State of the Union addresses. But until now no one had thought to use it as a weapon. Ron Klain, directing many of the day-to-day operations, thought it was a mistake to emphasize these sob stories. Cuomo won: Gore closed the debate with a reference to the Macneale family, which was worried about how to save for tuition for its kids. The Clinton-Gore Administration had a *positive plan* to help the family! The Macneales would be endangered by the Dole-Kemp *risky tax scheme*. For the debate against his next opponent Gore salted the audience with his Lenny Skutniks and asked them to stand as he read their names and told their stories.



The Bradley Debates: "Making It All Up"

THE debates against Bill Bradley showed how well Gore had learned his lessons. He practiced before each debate—though not for as long or as formally as at the 1996 Debate Camp.

As he had done when preparing for Ross Perot, Gore worked on restoring his elbows-out skills. The stultifying effects of a second term of isolation were so profound that they seemed to threaten his ability to mount a presidential campaign at all. "This is a guy who did hundreds of town meetings when he was a congressman and senator, and was terrific at it," Robert Shrum, who has played a major role in Gore's debate and speech strategy this year, says. "Then all of a sudden that stopped, and everything about his life was in a framework. He had to break out of that framework or he would have lost the nomination." Thus the flurry of rearrangements and fresh starts for the Gore campaign at the end of last year and the beginning of this year: moving the headquarters from Washington to Nashville ("from K Street to . . . Kmart," as Gore so winningly put it); edging out Bob Squier as the campaign's dominant figure and replacing him with Carter Eskew; the alpha-male advice from the feminist writer Naomi Wolf; the revamped wardrobe and more aggressive speaking style.

Gore worked hard to identify his opponent's essential weakness, so that he could exploit it. Bradley's, as Gore and his advisers saw it, was his proposal for changes in government health-insurance plans. And Gore analyzed or intuited what behavior on his part would most annoy Bradley. The result was a devastating win.

As when he faced Jack Kemp, Gore's team was surprised by how feeble the resistance was. "We had telegraphed from the day Bradley first announced his health plan that the weakness would be the impact on Medicaid," Elaine Kamarck says. "He had three months to explain how he was going to repair and improve Medicare benefits, but he never did it. We realized after a while that we could keep hitting him the same way and he would never come back."

So Gore hit, again and again, with the charge that Bradley was going to eliminate the Medicaid program and replace it with a voucher worth \$150 a month, which obviously couldn't buy private coverage with benefits comparable to Medicaid's. The charge was misleading at best. Under Bradley's plan, people who received Medicaid would get vouchers to buy their own insurance coverage. This was part of a broader effort to expand coverage to people who now lack Medicaid, private insurance, or any health insurance at all. The \$150 figure was the result of a complicated calculation, and it applied to people without dependents—not families, who might get two or three times as much. More important, Bradley's argument rested on replacing Medicaid with a voucher program, which would create a new market for health-insurance coverage and would in turn lead private insurers to offer new forms

of low-cost coverage. (This is like the contention that a school-voucher program, by creating a new market for education, would lead to the creation of new kinds of schools.) Agree or disagree with Bradley's plan, his \$150 estimate was based on "dynamic" rather than "static" assumptions. He did not contemplate sending today's average poor person out onto the street with \$150 in hand—but that is just about what Gore accused him of wanting to do.

Through the campaign Gore's team kept waiting for Bradley to launch a counterattack making clear that his plan would give more than \$150 to many families, that a new market would create new forms of coverage—and besides, that Gore's

Bradley's former press secretary says, "[Gore] knows just how to come up with something that has the ring of truth to it even though it's not actually true."

slower approach would leave some people totally uncovered. The Gore team was ready with retorts of its own.

But the replies never came. Eric Hauser, who was Bradley's press secretary during the campaign, says, "What we should have done is make clear that the Vice President was *making it all up*, and that you can't have a debate with someone who is willing to make up the facts. He knows just how to come up with something that has the ring of truth to it even though it's not actually true."

An exchange at the debate last February at the Apollo Theater, in Harlem, illustrated how much better Gore understood the realities of debate. He had again gone after Bradley on the \$150 issue—this time adding a racial element. Bradley's proposal would, by Gore's reckoning, hurt people now on Medicaid, who were disproportionately black and Latino; Bradley was thus proposing an anti-minority plan. Worse still, Bradley's plan would reduce some coverage for AIDS, and since AIDS victims were disproportionately black and Latino . . .

Bradley tried to explain what he really meant but floundered with these half-coherent words: "We've talked a lot about my health-care proposal in this campaign. In its terms, [AIDS is] a disability, a disability under Medicaid. It saves the same amount of money. It's the same services. It's the same benefits. The only difference is that now if you have HIV, you can qualify for insurance, and if you're in the neighborhood, you get . . . a community health benefit. That's the only difference. And tonight I pledge that any health-care bill that I would sign would have every Medicaid patient a better health plan than Medicaid is today."

Except for the pledge in the last sentence, this would be in-

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comprehensible to most listeners. Gore immediately delivered the perfect retort: "Well, that's not a plan, that's a magic wand, and it doesn't work that way. [*Lusty cheers from the crowd.*] The problem that people with AIDS and cancer and muscular dystrophy and other diseases have in the private health-insurance market is that the insurance companies don't want to take them. They want to get rid of them. You give them a hundred-and-fifty-dollar-a-month voucher, they can't buy it."

Gore's arguments about the racial impact of this plan were calculated to infuriate Bradley, whose greatest point of vanity concerned his belief that he, because of his NBA past, was especially sensitive—even noble—on all issues of race. Gore knew he could get deep under Bradley's skin with even one dig suggesting that he was just another uncaring white man.

The debate at the Apollo was full of such digs—for instance, an insinuation that Bradley was calling the Congressional Black Caucus stupid: "You know what? [*Exaggeratedly folksy manner.*] In my experience, the [Congressional] Black Caucus is *pretty savvy*. They know a lot more than you think they know. . . . Congressional Black Caucus is not out there being led around, you know. They know what the score is. And they also know that their brothers and sisters in New Jersey said *you* were never for them walking the walk, just talking the talk."

Even before the Apollo event Bradley had confessed how much this needling was getting to him. In a debate in January, in New Hampshire, Peter Jennings had asked each candidate whether the other had misrepresented his views at any time. Gore finally said no. Bradley, clearly stewing, said yes, of course: "The one that was most particularly offensive to me was when he said in this campaign that I was going to hurt African-Americans, Latinos, with the health-care program that I have offered. . . . To say to *me*, who's had the deep commitment to the issue of racial unity in this country since I started in politics, that I would go out and hurt African-Americans and Latinos consciously as a part of a policy I think really offended me."

Gore [*blandly*]: "Harry Truman said in 1948, I'm not giving him hell, I'm just telling the truth and he thinks it's hell."

Whatever It Takes

I ASKED Roy Neel, who has known and worked with Al Gore for so many years, what he thought Gore's strategy would be for debates with George W. Bush. "I think he has to be brutal on the issues where the differences between the two are crystal clear," Neel said, meaning gun control, Social Security and Medicare, and other classic Democrat-versus-Republican issues. "He's got to do it with the right touch. But he can't miss the opportunity to be brutal on those basic issues. If Bush has an Achilles' heel, it's that he doesn't know much about international affairs. While Gore doesn't know everything, he is extremely confident in those areas. So he's got to really drive the knife in on foreign affairs, national security, plus those core Democratic issues." Gore shouldn't store up attack lines to unleash no matter what the question,

Neel said: "He should look for Bush to give him an opening, and be so well prepared that when that opening arises, he goes right in for the kill." This kind of assault would be the natural culmination of Gore's evolution as a debater.

Neel said he hoped for something else, too. "I don't have any fears about his performance in a Bush debate. He has a first-rate group working with him. They will be very disciplined and will have everything thought out. But what I would like to see is for people to be able to look at him and—without hearing anything specifically that he's saying—think, 'You know, I *like* that guy. That guy makes me feel comfortable.'"

I kept a straight face as Neel said this, but he had identified the major liability of Gore's mature style. I can imagine that many people would respect Gore, or fear him, based on the way he has learned to destroy opponents. It is hard for me to imagine anyone's watching his technically strongest performances—against Gephardt, Dukakis, Perot, Kemp, Bradley—and thinking, You know, I *like* that guy.

I feel especially qualified to talk about the emotional impact of Gore's rhetorical style because of a recent concentrated exposure to it. In April, I spent several days in Nashville, at the Television News Archive at Vanderbilt University, viewing dozens of hours of Gore's speeches, press conferences, and debates in chronological order from 1987 into this year. The image that kept coming to mind was the physical transformation in the Michael Corleone character as played by Al Pacino through the three movies of the *Godfather* saga: in the beginning a clear-eyed young idealist; in the end a heavy-lidded, stone-faced man of respect who has outgrown illusions and faced up to the responsibility of doing what is necessary. (This was before I saw Jake Tapper's fantasy, in *Salon*, of Al "Gore-leone" avenging slights against his father.) "One of the reasons he's such a good debater is that none of this is personalized," Robert Shrum says of Gore. "The disagreements aren't personal, so they don't distort the way he thinks." It's just business.

What does Gore's success as a debater suggest about the traits he might display in office? Much of the evidence is hopeful. Ours is a culture that admires unforced natural talent—Bill Clinton rather than Bob Dole, John McEnroe rather than Ivan Lendl—but feels reassured by the idea of steady, dutiful effort from those in prominent positions. Without exception, the several dozen Gore associates I spoke with told me that effort—or some synonym, such as "discipline," "focus," "preparation"—was Gore's most striking trait. One called me back a few hours after our interview to say, "I can't emphasize it enough: this is a man capable of total focus on the job at hand." Another, asked to compare Gore's intelligence with his willingness to work, said, "For him, it would be a meaningless distinction. His intelligence *is* his willingness to work." This, of course, is the contrast Gore will try hardest to draw with George W. Bush, whose greatest appeal is his affability and whose weakness is his apparent distaste for dull, drawn-out work.

A President's success depends not just on his own efforts but also on his ability to assess the people who will advise him

and to use them in an effective way. Here, too, Gore's record as a debater is reassuring. His group of formal assistants and informal advisers has been stable over the years, with relatively few huffy defections or internal wars. In interviews these people seem loyal without being robotic. Gore clearly has figured out how to delegate and how to rely on them without feeling that his primacy is threatened. It is impossible to quantify how much Gore's current attack-dog approach reflects his intrinsic tendencies and how much is the result of shrewd counseling and coaching. Surely both are important. The telling point is that Gore has found a way to work with his advisers toward an effective approach. In his public presentations Gore has done worst when caught by surprise—just like most people except true naturals. (Remember that Bill Clinton ad-libbed his way through the opening section of an address to a joint session of Congress when the wrong speech showed up on the TelePrompTer. If Gore had been at the lectern, an assistant says, "that would have been a very short speech.") A President is called on for snap reactions and decisions less often than a presidential candidate is. A President usually has time to get advice and consider the options—the sort of deliberate procedure at which Gore has excelled.

Gore's willingness to fight with whatever tools are necessary would be easier to stomach in a President than in a candidate. His excesses have all come in the pursuit of office, not in the exercise of official powers. He has given no sign whatever of persecuting his opponents in a Nixonlike way. He dismantles them only when they stand between him and a victory he desires. It's like a military operation.

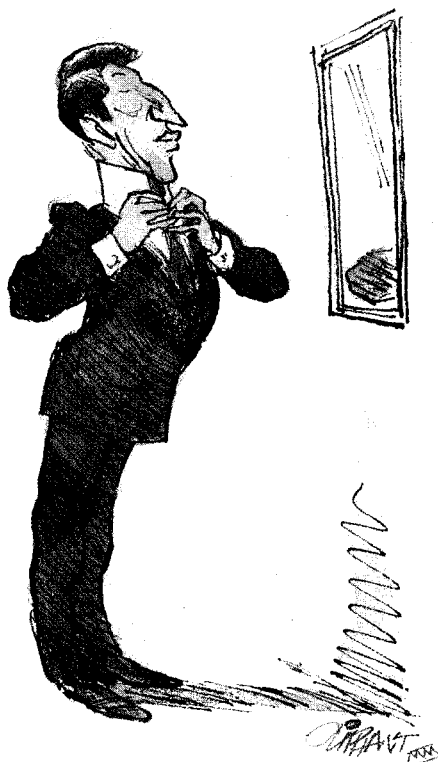
That's the good side. There's a bad side, too. Gore is manifestly willing to lie for political convenience. Bill Turque, in his authoritative biography *Inventing Al Gore* (2000), and the reporters Walter V. Robinson and Michael Crowley, of *The Boston Globe*, have detailed Gore's habit of hanging on to claims that can easily be disproved. The *Globe* reporters wrote this past April, "Starting as a junior congressman and continuing through this year's primaries, Gore has regularly promoted himself, and skewered his opponents, with embroidered, misleading, and occasionally false statements to a degree that even some of his allies concede is rare for a politician of his stature." To take just one example of needless small-scale distortion: during his first run for the presidency, in 1988, he said, "My wife and four children and I live on an active farm today outside of Carthage, Tennessee." At the time, the children were enrolled in schools near Washing-

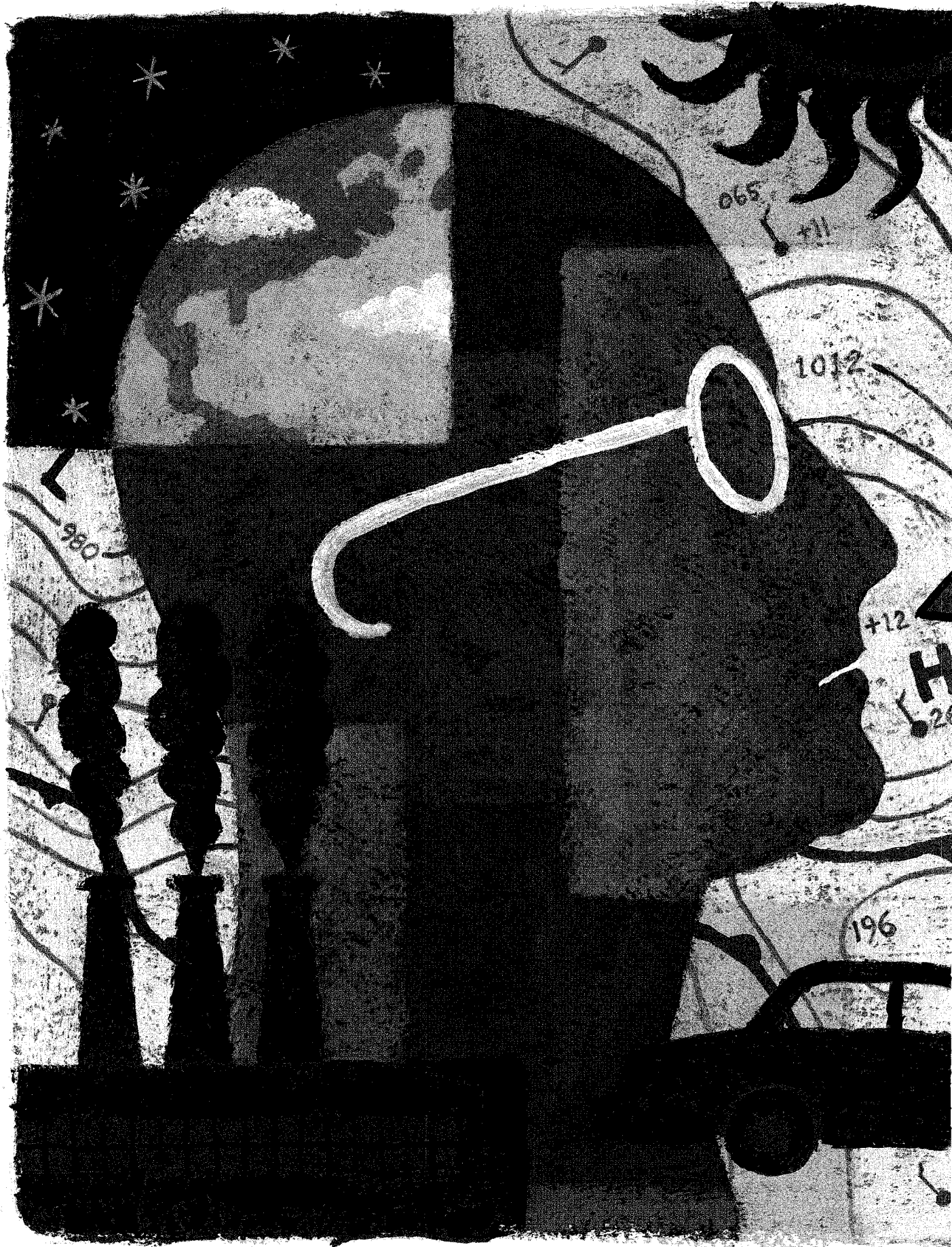
ton, D.C. Gore must have known that he was distorting Michael Dukakis's views about foreign policy and Bill Bradley's about race. He and his advisers show no squeamishness about having done so; it was up to the other side to fight back. His relentlessness is both impressive and unattractive. This may account for the contradictory view expressed in opinion polls: significant positive rankings because of Gore's competence and impact, but also significant negatives because of his crudely transparent attacks.

There is very little lightness, modesty, or self-awareness (as opposed to New Age self-inquiry) in the persona Gore now presents. His least poised moment in this year's debates came at the Apollo Theater, when Tamala Edwards, of *Time* magazine, pointed out that although Gore opposed school vouchers, he and his children had all gone to private schools. "Is there not a public or charter school in D.C. good enough for your child?" she asked. "And if not, why should the parents here have to keep their kids in public schools because they don't have the financial resources that you do?"

Gore, furious, replied, "All of my children—you know, you can leave them out of this if you want to—but all of my children have gone to both public schools and private schools. The reason I have opposed vouchers is . . ." This was Gore at his most efficient—moving on to the policy point and brushing aside the personal challenge. Afterward his advisers told me, in all seriousness, that what Gore objected to was "bringing his family into politics." This about the man who used his son's critical injury as the centerpiece of his convention speech in 1992, and used his sister's death in the same manner four years later.

Having studied Al Gore's record in some detail, I now respect his capacities more and like him less. Since mid-century the Democrats have liked to think that they will have natural, glorious winners (John Kennedy is the model) or losers who go down fighting the good, high-minded fight—a lineage that runs from Adlai Stevenson through Jimmy Carter in his re-election bid to Walter Mondale to Bill Bradley. Bill Clinton's achievement—becoming the first Democratic President in sixty years to win two terms—has reminded the party how high the price of victory can be: the constant need to compromise, the willingness to endure humiliations that would break normal people. But with his natural dazzle, Clinton could make most of it look like fun. Gore can provide none of that illusion. His appeal starts and ends with grinding out a win the hard way. ☸







Breaking the Global-Warming GRIDLOCK

by

DANIEL SAREWITZ

and ROGER PIELKE JR.

Both sides on the issue of greenhouse gases frame their arguments in terms of science, but each new scientific finding only raises new questions—dooming the debate to be a pointless spiral. It's time, the authors argue, for a radically new approach: if we took practical steps to reduce our vulnerability to today's weather, we would go a long way toward solving the problem of tomorrow's climate

IN THE LAST WEEK OF OCTOBER, 1998, HURRICANE MITCH stalled over Central America, dumping between three and six feet of rain within forty-eight hours, killing more than 10,000 people in landslides and floods, triggering a cholera epidemic, and virtually wiping out the economies of Honduras and Nicaragua. Several days later some 1,500 delegates, accompanied by thousands of advocates and media representatives, met in Buenos Aires at the fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Many at the conference pointed to

Hurricane Mitch as a harbinger of the catastrophes that await us if we do not act immediately to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other so-called greenhouse gases. The delegates passed a resolution of "solidarity with Central America" in which they expressed concern "that global warming may be contributing to the worsening of weather" and urged "governments, . . . and society in general, to continue their efforts to find permanent solutions to the factors which cause or may cause climate events." Children wandering bereft in the streets of Tegucigalpa became unwitting symbols of global warming.

But if Hurricane Mitch was a public-relations gift to environmentalists, it was also a stark demonstration of the failure of our current approach to protecting the environment. Disasters like Mitch are a present and historical reality, and they will become more common and more deadly regardless of global warming. Underlying the havoc in Central America were poverty, poor land-use practices, a degraded local environment, and inadequate emergency preparedness—conditions that will not be alleviated by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions.

POLITICAL action is essentially hostage to the ability of science not just to document global warming but to attribute it to human causes. But science is a process that generates more questions than answers.

At the heart of this dispiriting state of affairs is a vitriolic debate between those who advocate action to reduce global warming and those who oppose it. The controversy is informed by strong scientific evidence that the earth's surface has warmed over the past century. But the controversy, and the science, focus on the wrong issues, and distract attention from what needs to be done. The enormous scientific, political, and financial resources now aimed at the problem of

global warming create the perfect conditions for international and domestic political gridlock, but they can have little effect on the root causes of global environmental degradation, or on the human suffering that so often accompanies it. Our goal is to move beyond the gridlock and stake out some common ground for political dialogue and effective action.

Framing the Issue

IN politics everything depends on how an issue is framed: the terms of debate, the allocation of power and resources, the potential courses of action. The issue of global warming has been framed by a single question: Does the carbon dioxide emitted by industrialized societies threaten the earth's climate? On one side are the doomsayers, who foretell environmental disaster unless carbon-dioxide emissions are immediately reduced. On the other side are the cornucopians, who blindly insist that society can continue to pump billions of tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere with no ill effect, and that any effort to reduce emissions will stall the engines of industrialism that protect us from a

earth's climate, and the maturation of the modern environmental movement.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the combustion of fossil fuels—coal, oil, natural gas—has powered economic growth and also emitted great quantities of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. More than a century ago the Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius and the American geologist T. C. Chamberlin independently recognized that industrialization could lead to rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which might in turn raise the atmosphere's temperature by trapping solar radiation that would otherwise be reflected back into space—a "greenhouse effect" gone out of control. In the late 1950s the geophysicist Roger Revelle, arguing that the world was making itself the subject of a giant "geophysical experiment," worked to establish permanent stations for monitoring carbon-dioxide levels in the atmosphere. Monitoring documented what theory had predicted: atmospheric carbon dioxide was increasing.

In the United States the first high-level government mention of global warming was buried deep within a 1965 White House report on the nation's environmental problems. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s global warming—at that time typically referred to as "inadvertent modification of the atmosphere," and today embraced by the term "climate change"—remained an intriguing hypothesis that caught the attention of a few scientists but generated little concern among the public or environmentalists. Indeed, some climate researchers saw evidence for global cooling and a future ice age. In any case, the threat of nuclear war was sufficiently urgent, plausible, and horrific to crowd global warming off the catastrophe agenda.

Continued research, however, fortified the theory that fossil-fuel combustion could contribute to global warming. In 1977 the nonpartisan National Academy of Sciences issued a study called *Energy and Climate*, which carefully suggested that the possibility of global warming "should lead neither to panic nor to complacency." Rather, the study continued, it should "engender a lively

Hobbesian wilderness. From our perspective, each group is operating within a frame that has little to do with the practical problem of how to protect the global environment in a world of six billion people (and counting). To understand why global-warming policy is a comprehensive and dangerous failure, therefore, we must begin with a look at how the issue came to be framed in this way. Two converging trends are implicated: the evolution of scientific research on the

sense of urgency in getting on with the work of illuminating the issues that have been identified and resolving the scientific uncertainties that remain." As is typical with National Academy studies, the primary recommendation was for more research.

In the early 1980s the carbon-dioxide problem received its first sustained attention in Congress, in the form of hearings organized by Representative Al Gore, who had become concerned about global warming when he took a college course with Roger Revelle, twelve years earlier. In 1983 the Environmental Protection Agency released a report detailing some of the possible threats posed by the anthropogenic, or human-caused, emission of carbon dioxide, but the Reagan Administration decisively downplayed the document. Two years later a prestigious international scientific conference in Villach, Austria, concluded that climate change deserved the attention of policymakers worldwide. The following year, at a Senate fact-finding hearing stimulated by the conference, Robert Watson, a climate scientist at NASA, testified, "Global warming is inevitable. It is only a question of the magnitude and the timing."

At that point global warming was only beginning to insinuate itself into the public consciousness. The defining event came in June of 1988, when another NASA climate scientist, James Hansen, told Congress with "ninety-nine percent confidence" that "the greenhouse effect has been detected, and it is changing our climate now." Hansen's proclamation made the front pages of major newspapers, ignited a firestorm of public debate, and elevated the carbon-dioxide problem to pre-eminence on the environmental agenda, where it remains to this day. Nothing had so galvanized the environmental community since the original Earth Day, eighteen years before.

Historically, the conservation and environmental movements have been rooted in values that celebrate the intrinsic worth of unspoiled landscape and propagate the idea that the human spirit is sustained through communion with nature. More than fifty years ago Aldo Leopold, perhaps the most important environmen-

tal voice of the twentieth century, wrote, "We face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free. For us of the minority, . . . the chance to find a pasque-flower is a right as inalienable as free speech." But when global warming appeared, environmentalists thought they had found a justification better than inalienable rights—they had found facts and rationality, and they fell head over heels in love with science.

Of course, modern environmentalists were already in the habit of calling on science to help advance their agenda. In 1967, for example, the Environmental Defense Fund was founded with the aim of using science to support environmental protection through litigation. But global warming was, and is, different. It exists as an environmental issue only because of science. People can't directly sense global warming, the way they can see a clear-cut forest or feel the sting of urban smog in their throats. It is not a discrete event, like an oil spill or a nuclear accident. Global warming is so abstract that scientists argue over how they would know if they actually observed it. Scientists go to great lengths to measure and derive something called the "global average temperature" at the earth's surface, and the total rise in this temperature over the past century—an increase of about six tenths of a degree Celsius as of 1998—does suggest warming. But people and ecosystems experience local and regional temperatures, not the global average. Furthermore, most of the possible effects of global warming are not apparent in the present; rather, scientists predict that they will occur decades or even centuries hence. Nor is it likely that scientists will ever be able to attribute any isolated event—a hurricane, a heat wave—to global warming.

A central tenet of environmentalism is that less human interference in nature is better than more. The imagination of the environmental community was ignited not by the observation that greenhouse-gas concentrations were increasing but by the scientific conclusion that the increase was caused by human beings. The Environmental Defense Fund, perhaps because of its explicitly scien-

tific bent, was one of the first advocacy groups to make this connection. As early as 1984 its senior scientist, Michael Oppenheimer, wrote on the op-ed page of *The New York Times*,

With unusual unanimity, scientists testified at a recent Senate hearing that using the atmosphere as a garbage dump is about to catch up with us on a global scale. . . . Carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion and other "greenhouse" gases are throwing a blanket over the Earth. . . . The sea level will rise as land ice melts and the ocean expands. Beaches will erode while wetlands will largely disappear. . . . Imagine life in a sweltering, smoggy New York without Long Island's beaches and you have glimpsed the world left to future generations.

Preserving tropical jungles and wetlands, protecting air and water quality, slowing global population growth—goals that had all been justified for independent reasons, often by independent organizations—could now be linked to a single fact, anthropogenic carbon-dioxide emissions, and advanced along a single political front, the effort to reduce those emissions. Protecting forests, for example, could help fight global warming because forests act as "sinks" that absorb carbon dioxide. Air pollution could be addressed in part by promoting the same clean-energy sources that would reduce carbon-dioxide emissions. Population growth needed to be controlled in order to reduce demand for fossil-fuel combustion. And the environmental community could reinvigorate its energy-conservation agenda, which had flagged since the early 1980s, when the effects of the second Arab oil shock wore off. Senator Timothy Wirth, of Colorado, spelled out the strategy in 1988: "What we've got to do in energy conservation is try to ride the global warming issue. Even if the theory of global warming is wrong, to have approached global warming as if it is real means energy conservation, so we will be doing the right thing anyway in terms of economic policy and environmental policy." A broad array of environmental groups and think tanks, including the Environ-

mental Defense Fund, the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, the World Resources Institute, and the Union of Concerned Scientists, made reductions in carbon-dioxide emissions central to their agendas.

The moral problem seemed clear: human beings were causing the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. But the moral problem existed only because of a scientific fact—a fact that not only provided justification for doing many of the things that environmentalists wanted

of action with minimal political risk.

With little debate the Republican Administration and the Democratic Congress in 1990 created the U.S. Global Change Research Program. The program's annual budget reached \$1 billion in 1991 and \$1.8 billion in 1995, making it one of the largest science initiatives ever undertaken by the U.S. government. Its goal, according to Bush Administration documents, was "to establish the scientific basis for national and interna-

provide the basis for action under a complementary mechanism, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Signed by 154 nations at the 1992 "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro, the convention calls for voluntary reductions in carbon-dioxide emissions. It came into force as an international treaty in March of 1994, and has been ratified by 181 nations. Signatories continue to meet in periodic Conferences of the Parties, of which the most significant to date occurred in Kyoto in 1997, when binding emissions reductions for industrialized countries were proposed under an agreement called the Kyoto Protocol.

The IPCC defines climate change as any sort of change in the earth's climate, no matter what the cause. But the Framework Convention restricts its definition to changes that result from the anthropogenic emission of greenhouse gases. This restriction has profound implications for the framing of the issue. It makes all action under the convention hostage to the ability of scientists not just to document global warming but to attribute it to human causes. An apparently simple question, Are we causing global warming or aren't we?, has become the obsessional focus of science—and of policy.

Finally, if the reduction of carbon-dioxide emissions is an organizing principle for environmentalists, scientists, and environmental-policy makers, it is also an organizing principle for all those whose interests might be threatened by such a reduction. It's easy to be glib about who they might be—greedy oil and coal companies, the rapacious logging industry, recalcitrant automobile manufacturers, corrupt foreign dictatorships—and easy as well to document the excesses and absurdities propagated by some representatives of these groups. Consider, for example, the Greening Earth Society, which "promotes the optimistic scientific view that CO₂ is beneficial to humankind and all of nature," and happens to be funded by a coalition of coal-burning utility companies. One of the society's 1999 press releases reported that "there will only be sufficient food for the world's projected population in 2050 if atmospheric concentra-

EIGHTY million people were made homeless by weather-related disasters from 1988 to 1997. As the population of the developing world continues to rise, such numbers will rise as well, with or without global warming.

to do anyway but also dictated the overriding course of action: reduce carbon-dioxide emissions. Thus science was used to rationalize the moral imperative, unify the environmental agenda, and determine the political solution.

Research as Policy

THE summer of 1988 was stultifyingly hot even by Washington, D.C., standards, and the Mississippi River basin was suffering a catastrophic drought. Hansen's proclamation that the greenhouse effect was "changing our climate now" generated a level of public concern sufficient to catch the attention of many politicians. George Bush, who promised to be "the environmental President" and to counter "the greenhouse effect with the White House effect," was elected that November. Despite his campaign rhetoric, the new President was unprepared to offer policies that would curtail fossil-fuel production and consumption or impose economic costs for uncertain political gains. Bush's advisers recognized that support for scientific research offered the best solution politically, because it would give the appearance

tional policymaking related to natural and human-induced changes in the global Earth system." A central scientific objective was to "support national and international policymaking by developing the ability to predict the nature and consequences of changes in the Earth system, particularly climate change." A decade and more than \$16 billion later, scientific research remains the principal U.S. policy response to climate change.

Meanwhile, the marriage of environmentalism and science gave forth issue: diplomatic efforts to craft a global strategy to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions. Scientists, environmentalists, and government officials, in an attempt to replicate the apparently successful international response to stratospheric-ozone depletion that was mounted in the mid-1980s, created an institutional structure aimed at formalizing the connection between science and political action. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was established through the United Nations, to provide snapshots of the evolving state of scientific understanding. The IPCC issued major assessments in 1990 and 1996; a third is due early next year. These assessments

tions of carbon dioxide are permitted to increase, unchecked.” Of course, neither side of the debate has a lock on excess or distortion. The point is simply that the climate-change problem has been framed in a way that catalyzes a determined and powerful opposition.

The Problem With Predictions

WHEN anthropogenic carbon-dioxide emissions became the defining fact for global environmentalism, scientific uncertainty about the causes and consequences of global warming emerged as the apparent central obstacle to action. As we have seen, the Bush Administration justified its huge climate-research initiative explicitly in terms of the need to reduce uncertainty before taking action. Al Gore, by then a senator, agreed, explaining that “more research and better research and better targeted research is absolutely essential if we are going to eliminate the remaining areas of uncertainty and build the

broader and stronger political consensus necessary for the unprecedented actions required to address this problem.” Thus did a Republican Administration and a Democratic Congress—one side looking for reasons to do nothing, the other seeking justification for action—converge on the need for more research.

How certain do we need to be before we take action? The answer depends, of course, on where our interests lie. Environmentalists can tolerate a good deal more uncertainty on this issue than can, say, the executives of utility or automobile companies. Science is unlikely to overcome such a divergence in interests. After all, science is not a fact or even a set of facts; rather, it is a process of inquiry that generates more questions than answers. The rise in anthropogenic greenhouse-gas emissions, once it was scientifically established, simply pointed to other questions. How rapidly might carbon-dioxide levels rise in the future? How might climate respond to this rise? What might be the effects of that response? Such questions are inestimably

complex, their answers infinitely contestable and always uncertain, their implications for human action highly dependent on values and interests.

Having wedded themselves to science, environmentalists must now cleave to it through thick and thin. When research results do not support their cause, or are simply uncertain, they cannot resort to values-based arguments, because their political opponents can portray such arguments as an opportunistic abandonment of rationality. Environmentalists have tried to get out of this bind by invoking the “precautionary principle”—a dandified version of “better safe than sorry”—to advance the idea that action in the presence of uncertainty is justified if potential harm is great. Thus uncertainty itself becomes an argument for action. But nothing is gained by this tactic either, because just as attitudes toward uncertainty are rooted in individual values and interests, so are attitudes toward potential harm.

Charged by the Framework Convention to search for proof of harm, scien-

LASER PALMISTRY: THE EARLY DAYS

Determined not to ask too much,
the chiromantic surgeon's very first client
passed up the lottery-winning star along the Apollo line,
the peacock's eye on the Mercury finger for
 luck and protection.
But, given the discount for scientific advancement,
she made four choices: erase the ring of Saturn
that circled her left middle finger and kept
 her melancholy;
build up her mount of Apollo, to make her
lively and creative; lengthen her heart line—
she would be discriminating and faithful in love;
and draw her a good strong fate line, because
 she had none.
What kind? “Surprise me,” she said,
and opened her hands, and felt so naked
she had to close her eyes.

Who knew that while his meticulous lasers worked,
the tea leaves in her mug in the kitchen sink
shifted before they dried? or that three counties over,
a sheep suffered cramps as its entrails readjusted?
Meanwhile, no fewer than nine unrelated people
felt tickles like ants in their palms as their
 own lines moved.
That night, while the patient's unexpected headache
accompanied minor changes in the protuberances
 of her skull,
a few widely scattered astronomers frowned
at anomalies in their data,
and on Floreana, in the Galápagos Islands,
an as yet undiscovered vein
of perfectly aligned crystals disappeared.
And that was just the beginning.

—SARAH LINDSAY

tists have turned to computer models of the atmosphere and the oceans, called general circulation models, or GCMs. Carbon-dioxide levels and atmospheric temperatures are measures of the physical state of the atmosphere. GCMs, in contrast, are mathematical representations that scientists use to try to understand past climate conditions and predict future ones. With GCMs scientists seek to explore how climate might respond under different influences—for example, different rates of carbon-dioxide increase. GCMs have calculated global average temperatures for the past century that closely match actual surface-temperature records; this gives climate modelers some confidence that they understand how climate behaves.

Computer models are a bit like Aladdin's lamp—what comes out is very seductive, but few are privy to what goes on inside. Even the most complex models, however, have one crucial quality that non-experts can easily understand: their accuracy can be fully evaluated only after seeing what happens in the real world over time. In other words, predictions of how climate will behave in the future cannot be proved accurate today. There are other fundamental problems with relying on GCMs. The ability of many models to reproduce temperature records may in part reflect the fact that the scientists who designed them already “knew the answer.” As John Firor, a former director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, has observed, climate models “are made by humans who tend to shape or use their models in ways that mirror their own notion of what a desirable outcome would be.” Although various models can reproduce past temperature records, and yield similar predictions of future temperatures, they are unable to replicate other observed aspects of climate, such as cloud behavior and atmospheric temperature, and they diverge widely in predicting specific regional climate phenomena, such as precipitation and the frequency of extreme weather events. Moreover, it is simply not possible to know far in advance if the models agree on future temperature because they are similarly right or similarly wrong.

In spite of such pitfalls, a fundamental assumption of both U.S. climate policy and the UN Framework Convention is that increasingly sophisticated models, run on faster computers and supported by more data, will yield predictions that can resolve political disputes and guide action. The promise of better predictions is irresistible to champions of carbon-dioxide reduction, who, after all, must base their advocacy on the claim that anthropogenic greenhouse-gas emissions

young forests in the eastern United States that are particularly efficient at absorbing carbon dioxide. But these young forests exist only because old-growth forests were clear-cut in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to make way for farms that were later abandoned in favor of larger, more efficient midwestern farms. In other words, the possibility that the United States is a net carbon-dioxide sink does not reflect efforts to protect the environment; on

A S A BASIS for action, vulnerability to weather has everything that global warming lacks: a clear story rooted in concrete experience, observable in the present, definable in terms of widely shared values.

will be harmful in the future. But regardless of the sophistication of such predictions, new findings will almost inevitably be accompanied by new uncertainties—that's the nature of science—and may therefore act to fuel, rather than to quench, political debate. Our own prediction is that increasingly complex mathematical models that delve ever more deeply into the intricacies and the uncertainties of climate will only hinder political action.

An example of how more scientific research fuels political debate came in 1998, when a group of prominent researchers released the results of a model analyzing carbon-dioxide absorption in North America. Their controversial findings, published in the prestigious journal *Science*, suggested that the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by U.S. forests might be greater than the amount emitted by the nation's fossil-fuel combustion. This conclusion has two astonishing implications. First, the United States—the world's most profligate energy consumer—may not be directly contributing to rising atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide. Second, the atmosphere seems to be benefiting from

the contrary, it reflects a history of deforestation and development.

Needless to say, these results quickly made their way into the political arena. At a hearing of the House Resources Committee, Representative John E. Peterson, of Pennsylvania, a Republican, asserted, “There are recent studies that show that in the Northeast, where we have continued to cut timber, and have a regenerating, younger forest, that the greenhouse gases are less when they leave the forest. . . . So a young, growing, vibrant forest is a whole lot better for clean air than an old dying forest.” George Frampton, the director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, countered, “The science on this needs a lot of work. . . . we need more money for scientific research to undergird that point of view.” How quickly the tables can turn: here was a conservative politician wielding (albeit with limited coherence) the latest scientific results to justify logging old-growth forests in the name of battling global warming, while a Clinton Administration official backpedaled in the manner more typically adopted by opponents of action on climate change—

invoking the need for more research.

That's a problem with science—it can turn around and bite you. An even more surprising result has recently emerged from the study of Antarctic glaciers. A strong argument in favor of carbon-dioxide reduction has been the possibility that if temperatures rise owing to greenhouse-gas emissions, glaciers will melt, the sea level will rise, and populous coastal zones all over the world will be inundated. The West Antarctic Ice Sheet has been a subject of particular concern, both because of evidence that it is now retreating and because of geologic studies showing that it underwent catastrophic collapse at least once in the past million years or so. "Behind the reasoned scientific estimates," Greenpeace warns, "lies the possibility of . . . the potential catastrophe of a six metre rise in sea level." But recent research from Antarctica shows that this ice sheet has been melting for thousands of years. Sea-level rise is a problem, but anthropogenic global warming is not the only culprit, and reducing emissions cannot be the only solution.

To make matters more difficult, some phenomena, especially those involving human behavior, are intrinsically unpredictable. Any calculation of future anthropogenic global warming must include an estimate of rates of fossil-fuel combustion in the coming decades. This means that scientists must be able to predict not only the amounts of coal, oil, and natural gas that will be consumed but also changes in the mixture of fossil fuels and other energy sources, such as nuclear, hydro-electric, and solar. These predictions rest on interdependent factors that include energy policies and prices, rates of economic growth, patterns of industrialization and technological innovation, changes in population, and even wars and other geopolitical events. Scientists have no history of being able to predict any of these things. For example, their inability to issue accurate population projections is "one of the best-kept secrets of demography," according to Joel Cohen, the director of the Laboratory of Populations at Rockefeller University. "Most professional demographers no longer believe they can predict pre-

cisely the future growth rate, size, composition and spatial distribution of populations," Cohen has observed.

Predicting the human influence on climate also requires an understanding of how climate behaved "normally," before there was any such influence. But what are normal climate patterns? In the absence of human influence, how stationary is climate? To answer such questions, researchers must document and explain the behavior of the pre-industrial climate, and they must also determine how the climate would have behaved over the past two centuries had human beings not been changing the composition of the atmosphere. However, despite the billions spent so far on climate research, Kevin Trenberth, a senior scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, told the *Chicago Tribune* last year, "This may be a shock to many people who assume that we do know adequately what's going on with the climate, but we don't." The National Academy of Sciences reported last year that "deficiencies in the accuracy, quality, and continuity of the [climate] records . . . place serious limitations on the confidence" of research results.

If the normal climate is non-stationary, then the task of identifying the human fingerprint in global climate change becomes immeasurably more difficult. And the idea of a naturally stationary climate may well be chimerical. Climate has changed often and dramatically in the recent past. In the 1940s and 1950s, for example, the East Coast was hampered by a spate of powerful hurricanes, whereas in the 1970s and 1980s hurricanes were much less common. What may appear to be "abnormal" hurricane activity in recent years is abnormal only in relation to this previous quiet period. As far as the ancient climate goes, paleoclimatologists have found evidence of rapid change, even over periods as short as several years. Numerous influences could account for these changes. Ash spewed high into the atmosphere by large volcanoes can reflect solar radiation back into space and result in short-term cooling, as occurred after the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo. Variations in the energy emitted by the

sun also affect climate, in ways that are not yet fully understood. Global ocean currents, which move huge volumes of warm and cold water around the world and have a profound influence on climate, can speed up, slow down, and maybe even die out over very short periods of time—perhaps less than a decade. Were the Gulf Stream to shut down, the climate of Great Britain could come to resemble that of Labrador.

Finally, human beings have been changing the surface of the earth for millennia. Scientists increasingly realize that deforestation, agriculture, irrigation, urbanization, and other human activities can lead to major changes in climate on a regional or perhaps even a global scale. Thomas Stohlgren, of the U.S. Geological Survey, has written, "The effects of land use practices on regional climate may overshadow larger-scale temperature changes commonly associated with observed increases in carbon dioxide." The idea that climate may constantly be changing for a variety of reasons does not itself undercut the possibility that anthropogenic carbon dioxide could seriously affect the global climate, but it does confound scientific efforts to predict the consequences of carbon-dioxide emissions.

The Other 80 Percent

IF predicting how climate will change is difficult and uncertain, predicting how society will be affected by a changing climate—especially at the local, regional, and national levels, where decision-making takes place—is immeasurably more so. And predicting the impact on climate of reducing carbon-dioxide emissions is so uncertain as to be meaningless. What we do know about climate change suggests that there will be winners and losers, with some areas and nations potentially benefiting from, say, longer growing seasons or more rain, and others suffering from more flooding or drought. But politicians have no way to accurately calibrate the effects—human and economic—of global warming, or the benefits of reducing carbon-dioxide emissions.

Imagine yourself a leading policy-

maker in a poor, overpopulated, undernourished nation with severe environmental problems. What would it take to get you worried about global warming? You would need to know not just that global warming would make the conditions in your country worse but also that any of the scarce resources you applied to reducing carbon-dioxide emissions would lead to more benefits than if they were applied in another area, such as industrial development or housing construction. Such knowledge is simply unavailable. But you do know that investing in industrial development or better housing would lead to concrete political, economic, and social benefits.

More specifically, suppose that many people in your country live in shacks on a river's floodplain. Floodplains are created and sustained by repeated flooding, so floods are certain to occur in the future, regardless of global warming. Given a choice between building new houses away from the floodplain and converting power plants from cheap local coal to costlier imported fuels, what would you do? New houses would ensure that lives and homes would be saved; a new power plant would reduce carbon-dioxide emissions but leave people vulnerable to floods. In the developing world the carbon-dioxide problem pales alongside immediate environmental and developmental problems. The *China Daily* reported during the 1997 Kyoto Conference:

The United States . . . and other nations made the irresponsible demand . . . that the developing countries should make commitments to limiting greenhouse gas emissions. . . . As a developing country, China has 60 million poverty-stricken people and China's per capita gas emissions are only one-seventh of the average amount of more developed countries. Ending poverty and developing the economy must still top the agenda of [the] Chinese government.

For the most part, the perspectives of those in the developing world—about 80 percent of the planet's population—have been left outside the frame of the climate-change discussion. This is hard-

ly surprising, considering that the frame was defined mainly by environmentalists and scientists in affluent nations. Developing nations, meanwhile, have quite reasonably refused to agree to the targets for carbon-dioxide reduction set under the Kyoto Protocol. The result may feel like a moral victory to some environmentalists, who reason that industrialized countries, which caused the problem to begin with, should shoulder the primary responsibility for solving it. But the victory is hollow, because most future emissions increases will come from the developing world. In affluent nations almost everyone already owns a full complement of energy-consuming devices. Beyond a certain point increases in income do not result in proportional increases in energy consumption; people simply trade in the old model for a new and perhaps more efficient one. If present trends continue, emissions from the developing world are likely to exceed those from the industrialized nations within the next decade or so.

Twelve years after carbon dioxide became the central obsession of global environmental science and politics, we face the following two realities:

First, atmospheric carbon-dioxide levels will continue to increase. The Kyoto Protocol, which represents the world's best attempt to confront the issue, calls for industrialized nations to reduce their emissions below 1990 levels by the end of this decade. Political and technical realities suggest that not even this modest goal will be achieved. To date, although eighty-four nations have signed the Kyoto Protocol, only twenty-two nations—half of them islands, and none of them major carbon-dioxide emitters—have ratified it. The United States Senate, by a vote of 95–0 in July of 1997, indicated that it would not ratify any climate treaty that lacked provisions requiring developing nations to reduce their emissions. The only nations likely to achieve the emissions commitments set under Kyoto are those, like Russia and Ukraine, whose economies are in ruins. And even successful implementation of the treaty would not halt the progressive increase in global carbon-dioxide emissions.

Second, even if greenhouse-gas emissions could somehow be rolled back to pre-industrial levels, the impacts of climate on society and the environment would continue to increase. Climate affects the world not just through phenomena such as hurricanes and droughts but also because of societal and environmental vulnerability to such phenomena. The horrific toll of Hurricane Mitch reflected not an unprecedented climatic event but a level of exposure typical in developing countries where dense and rapidly increasing populations live in environmentally degraded conditions. Similar conditions underlay more-recent disasters in Venezuela and Mozambique.

If these observations are correct, and we believe they are essentially indisputable, then framing the problem of global warming in terms of carbon-dioxide reduction is a political, environmental, and social dead end. We are not suggesting that humanity can with impunity emit billions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, or that reducing those emissions is not a good idea. Nor are we making the nihilistic point that since climate undergoes changes for a variety of reasons, there is no need to worry about additional changes imposed by human beings. Rather, we are arguing that environmentalists and scientists, in focusing their own, increasingly congruent interests on carbon-dioxide emissions, have framed the problem of global environmental protection in a way that can offer no realistic prospect of a solution.

Redrawing the Frame

LOCAL weather is the day-to-day manifestation of global climate. Weather is what we experience, and lately there has been plenty to experience. In recent decades human, economic, and environmental losses from disasters related to weather have increased dramatically. Insurance-industry data show that insured losses from weather have been rising steadily. A 1999 study by the German firm Munich Reinsurance Company compared the 1960s with the 1990s and concluded that “the number of great natural catastrophes in-

creased by a factor of three, with economic losses—taking into account the effects of inflation—increasing by a factor of more than eight and insured losses by a factor of no less than sixteen.” And yet scientists have been unable to observe a global increase in the number or the severity of extreme weather events. In 1996 the IPCC concluded, “There is no evidence that extreme weather events, or climate variability, has increased, in a global sense, through the 20th century, although data and analyses are poor and not comprehensive.”

What has unequivocally increased is society’s vulnerability to weather. At the beginning of the twentieth century the earth’s population was about 1.6 billion people; today it is about six billion people. Almost four times as many people are exposed to weather today as were a century ago. And this increase has, of course, been accompanied by enormous increases in economic activity, development, infrastructure, and interdependence. In the past fifty years, for example, Florida’s population rose fivefold; 80 percent of this burgeoning population lives within twenty miles of the coast. The great Miami hurricane of 1926

According to the *World Disasters Report 1999*, 80 million people were made homeless by weather-related disasters from 1988 to 1997. As the population and vulnerability of the developing world continue to rise, such numbers will continue to rise as well, with or without global warming.

Environmental vulnerability is also on the rise. The connections between weather impacts and environmental quality are immediate and obvious—much more so than the connections between global warming and environmental quality. Deforestation, the destruction of wetlands, and the development of fragile coastlines can greatly magnify flooding; floods, in turn, can mobilize toxic chemicals in soil and storage facilities and cause devastating pollution of water sources and harm to wildlife. Poor agricultural, forest-management, and grazing practices can exacerbate the effects of drought, amplify soil erosion, and promote the spread of wildfires. Damage to the environment due to deforestation directly contributed to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Mitch, as denuded hillsides washed away in catastrophic landslides, and ex-

get worse in the future. Second, the only way to reduce these impacts is to reduce societal vulnerability to them. Third, reducing vulnerability can be achieved most effectively by encouraging democracy, raising standards of living, and improving environmental quality in the developing world. Fourth, such changes offer the best prospects not only for adapting to a capricious climate but also for reducing carbon-dioxide emissions.

The implicit moral imperative is not to prevent human disruption of the environment but to ameliorate the social and political conditions that lead people to behave in environmentally disruptive ways. This is a critical distinction—and one that environmentalists and scientists embroiled in the global-warming debate have so far failed to make.

To begin with, any global effort to reduce vulnerability to weather and climate must address the environmental conditions in developing nations. Poor land-use and natural-resource-management practices are, of course, a reflection of poverty, but they are also caused by government policies, particularly those that encourage unsustainable environmental activities. William Ascher, a political scientist at Duke University, has observed that such policies typically do not arise out of ignorance or lack of options but reflect conscious tradeoffs made by government officials faced with many competing priorities and political pressures. Nations, even poor ones, have choices. It was not inevitable, for example, that Indonesia would promote the disastrous exploitation of its forests by granting subsidized logging concessions to military and business leaders. This was the policy of an autocratic government seeking to manipulate powerful sectors of society. In the absence of open, democratically responsive institutions, Indonesian leaders were not accountable for the costs that the public might bear, such as increased vulnerability to floods, landslides, soil erosion, drought, and fire. Promoting democratic institutions in developing nations could be the most important item on an agenda aimed at protecting the global environment and reducing vulnerability to climate. Environmental groups concerned about the

THE MORAL imperative should be not to prevent human disruption of the environment but to ameliorate the social and political conditions that lead people to behave in environmentally disruptive ways.

made landfall over a small, relatively poor community and caused about \$76 million worth of damage (in inflation-adjusted dollars). Today a storm of similar magnitude would strike a sprawling, affluent metropolitan area of two million people, and could cause more than \$80 billion worth of damage. The increase in vulnerability is far more dramatic in the developing world, where in an average year tens of thousands of people die in weather-related disasters.

cessive development along unmanaged floodplains put large numbers of people in harm’s way.

Our view of climate and the environment draws on people’s direct experience and speaks to widely shared values. It therefore has an emotional and moral impact that can translate into action. This view is framed by four precepts. First, the impacts of weather and climate are a serious threat to human welfare in the present and are likely to

consequences of climate change ought to consider reorienting their priorities accordingly.

Such long-term efforts must be accompanied by activities with a shorter-term payoff. An obvious first step would be to correct some of the imbalances created by the obsession with carbon dioxide. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development has allocated \$1 billion over five years to help developing nations quantify, monitor, and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, but is spending less than a tenth of that amount on programs to prepare for and prevent disasters. These priorities should be rearranged. Similarly, the United Nations' International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is a relatively low-level effort that should be elevated to a status comparable to that of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Intellectual and financial resources are also poorly allocated in the realm of science, with research focused disproportionately on understanding and predicting basic climatic processes. Such research has yielded much interesting information about the global climate system. But little priority is given to generating and disseminating knowledge that people and communities can use to reduce their vulnerability to climate and extreme weather events. For example, researchers have made impressive strides in anticipating the impacts of some relatively short-term climatic phenomena, notably El Niño and La Niña. If these advances were accompanied by progress in monitoring weather, identifying vulnerable regions and populations, and communicating useful information, we would begin to reduce the toll exacted by weather and climate all over the world.

A powerful international mechanism for moving forward already exists in the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The language of the treaty offers sufficient flexibility for new priorities. The text states that signatory nations have an obligation to "cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change [and to] develop and elaborate appropriate and integrated plans for coastal zone management, wa-

ter resources and agriculture, and for the protection and rehabilitation of areas . . . affected by drought and desertification, as well as floods."

The idea of improving our adaptation to weather and climate has been taboo in many circles, including the realms of international negotiation and political debate. "Do we have so much faith in our own adaptability that we will risk destroying the integrity of the entire global ecological system?" Vice President Gore asked in his book *Earth in the Balance* (1992). "Believing that we can adapt to just about anything is ultimately a kind of laziness, an arrogant faith in our ability to react in time to save our skin." For environmentalists, adaptation represents a capitulation to the momentum of human interference in nature. For their opponents, putting adaptation on the table would mean acknowledging the reality of global warming. And for scientists, focusing on adaptation would call into question the billions of tax dollars devoted to research and technology centered on climate processes, models, and predictions.

Yet there is a huge potential constituency for efforts focused on adaptation: everyone who is in any way subject to the effects of weather. Reframing the climate problem could mobilize this constituency and revitalize the Framework Convention. The revitalization could concentrate on coordinating disaster relief, debt relief, and development assistance, and on generating and providing information on climate that participating countries could use in order to reduce their vulnerability.

An opportunity to advance the cause of adaptation is on the horizon. The U.S. Global Change Research Program is now finishing its report on the National Assessment of the Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change. The draft includes examples from around the United States of why a greater focus on adaptation to climate makes sense. But it remains to be seen if the report will redefine the terms of the climate debate, or if it will simply become fodder in the battle over carbon-dioxide emissions.

Finally, efforts to reduce carbon-diox-

ide emissions need not be abandoned. The Framework Convention and its offshoots also offer a promising mechanism for promoting the diffusion of energy-efficient technologies that would reduce emissions. Both the convention and the Kyoto Protocol call on industrialized nations to share new energy technologies with the developing world. But because these provisions are coupled to carbon-dioxide-reduction mandates, they are trapped in the political gridlock. They should be liberated, promoted independently on the basis of their intrinsic environmental and economic benefits, and advanced through innovative funding mechanisms. For example, as the United Nations Development Programme has suggested, research into renewable-energy technologies for poor countries could be supported in part by a modest levy on patents registered under the World Intellectual Property Organization. Such ideas should be far less divisive than energy policies advanced on the back of the global-warming agenda.

As an organizing principle for political action, vulnerability to weather and climate offers everything that global warming does not: a clear, uncontroversial story rooted in concrete human experience, observable in the present, and definable in terms of unambiguous and widely shared human values, such as the fundamental rights to a secure shelter, a safe community, and a sustainable environment. In this light, efforts to blame global warming for extreme weather events seem maddeningly perverse—as if to say that those who died in Hurricane Mitch were symbols of the profligacy of industrialized society, rather than victims of poverty and the vulnerability it creates.

Such perversity shows just how morally and politically dangerous it can be to elevate science above human values. In the global-warming debate the logic behind public discourse and political action has been precisely backwards. Environmental prospects for the coming century depend far less on our strategies for reducing carbon-dioxide emissions than on our determination and ability to reduce human vulnerability to weather and climate. ☸

A LITTLE HERBAL PRIMER

by CATHY SMITH BOWERS

Rosemary

Prostratus, Alba, Severn Sea,
good memory
you bequeath. And
to the woman

who wears you on her head, a man
who will be true.
It has been said
when Mary on

her flight to Egypt laid her cloak
on you, your stunned
white blossoms turned
suddenly blue.

Sorrel

to my father

Blackfoot woman you would never
know, what made her
name you that? Name
you kept hidden

from your friends who answered to Bill
or Joe. Silly.
Unmanly, you
said. You who knew

only stories. How the mare she
had loved broke the
fence when she died.
How hard you cried.

Horehound

Seed of Horus, Eye of the Star,
Bull's Blood. Oh, where
did Granddaddy
get the stuff! Treats

bitter as quinine he reached for,
yes, whenever
we visited.
Still, beneath that
gall was just enough sweet to lure
us back for more.
Odd, still, how much
we miss the stuff.

Yarrow

Oh, bittersweet Achillea,
the men you must
have saved to earn
his name, he who

knew how well your feathered leaves
stanch the flow of
blood. How we must
defame you, who

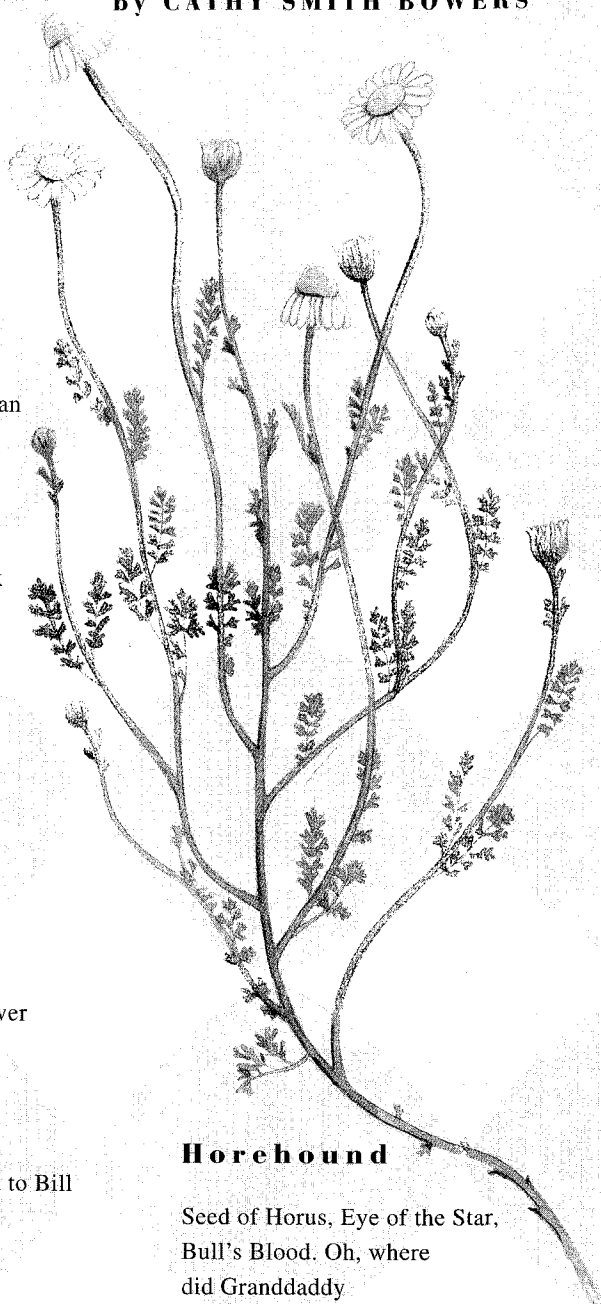
use you now for acne's surest
cure, the quick
decomposition
of manure.

Chamomile

Maythen to the Anglo-Saxon,
Egypt's minion
offered up to
sun. Little weed

of our childhood picked to appease
our mother's ire
when Father turned
to drink. Too soon

we learn, as field and cove and ditch
we tread, the more
it is trodden
the more it spreads.



Fish Heads

by SANDRO MEALLET

SOMETIMES, that summer in Los Angeles, we fished and crabbed behind the Maritime Museum or from the concrete pier next to the Catalina Terminal, underneath the San Pedro side of the Vincent Thomas Bridge. Sometimes we silently borrowed a rowboat from the tugboat docks and paddled to Terminal Island, across the harbor just in front of us, and hid the rowboat under an unbusy

wharf. Then we strolled over to Berth 300 with drop lines, bait knives, and gotta-have doughnuts, all in one or two buckets. Sometimes, as an extra, we got to watch the big gray pelicans just off the edge of Berth 300 headfirst themselves into the wavy seawater, with the small trailer birds hot on their tails, hoping to snatch and scoop away any overflow from the huge bills. Sometimes, as we fished and



The father's lonely figure moved along the wharf, arms
We decided before he reached us that if he got even a little bit crazy

watched the pelicans, we liked to recall that Berth 300 was next to the federal penitentiary, where rich businessmen spent their caught days. It was also where Al Capone was imprisoned many years ago.

But mostly we headed to the Pink Building, over by Dead-man's Slip and back on the San Pedro side, because the fish there bit hungry and came in spread-out schools. Often the fish schools jumped greedy from the water for the baited ends of our lowering drop lines, as if they couldn't wait for the frying pan. And always, at each spot, Tom-Su sat himself down alone with his drop line and stared into the water as he rocked back and forth.

Aside from Tom-Su's tagging along, the summer was a typical one for us. We'd fish and crab for most of each day and then head to the San Pedro fish market. We sold our catch to locals before they stepped into the market—mostly Slavs and Italians, who usually bought everything—and we split up the money. When the catch was too meager to sell, it went to the one whose family needed it the most.

Tom-Su spoke very little English and understood even less. He was new from Korea, and had a special way of treating fish that wiggled at the end of his drop line. We'd never seen anything like it.

"Tom-Su," one of us once said, "tell us the truth. Why do you bite the heads off the fish when they're still alive?"

"Dead already." And that's all he said, with a grin.

Tom-Su had buckteeth and often drooled as if his mouth and jaw had been forever dentist-numbed. He always wore suspenders with his jeans, which were too high and tight around his waist. But we didn't know how to explain to him that it was goofy not only to have his pants flooding so hard but also to be putting the vise grip on his nuts. Me and the fellas wondered on and off just how we could make Tom-Su understand that down the line he wasn't gonna be a daddy, disrespecting his jewels the way he did. To top it off, Tom-Su sported a rope instead of a belt, definitely nailing down the supersorry look.

"Tom-Su," one of us once said, "pull your pants down a little so you don't hurt yourself!"



stiff at his sides and hands pushed into jacket pockets.

we'd beat him until he cried and then toss him into the harbor

"You welcome." And that's all he said, with a grin.

He was goofy in other ways, too. His baseball hat didn't fit his misshapen head; he moved as if he had rubber for bones; his skin was like a vanilla lampshade; and he would unexpectedly look at you with cannibal-hungry eyes, complete with underbags and socket-sinkage.

"Tom-Su," one of us once said to him, "what are you looking at?"

"That's good." And that's all he said, with a grin.

The drool and cannibal eyes made some of us think of his food intake. And if Tom-Su was hungry, we couldn't blame him. His diet was out there like Pluto. In his house once, with his father not home, we opened the fridge and saw it packed wall to wall with seaweed. Green ocean plants in jars, in plastic bags, in boxes, and open on the shelves, as if they were growing on vines. The fridge smelled of musty freon. My teeth might've bucked on me, too, with nothing but seaweed for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

"Tom-Su," one of us said to him in the kitchen, "is this all you eat?"

"Pretty good." And that's all he said, with a grin, as he opened the cupboard to show us a year's supply of the green stuff.

A seaweed breakfast? Know what I'm saying? Out there. So when Tom-Su got around the live-and-kicking-for-life fish, and I mean meat and not ocean plants, well, he got very involved with the catch in a way none of us would, or could, or maybe even should. Early on I guess you could've called his fish-head-biting a hobby, or maybe a creepy-gross natural ability—one you wouldn't want to be born with yourself.

But Tom-Su was cool with us, because he carried our buckets wherever we headed along the waterfront, and because he eventually depended on us—though at the time none of us knew how much. Wherever we went, he went, tagging along in his own speechless way, nodding his head, drifting off elsewhere, but always ready to bust out his bucktoothed grin.

IN the beginning it had bugged us that Tom-Su went straight to his lonely area, sat down, and rocked, rocked, rocked. But eventually we got used to it, or forgot about him altogether. We had our fishing to do. Bait, for example, not Tom-Su's state of mind, was something we had to give serious thought to. If the fish weren't biting, we had to get experimental on them. Sometimes we'd bring anchovies for bait. They were salty and tough and held fast to the hook. The fish loved to nibble and then chomp at them. Sometimes we'd bring squid, mostly when we were interested in bigger mackerel or bonito, which brought us more than chump change at the fish market. Sometimes we'd bring lures (mostly when no bait could be found), and with these we'd be lucky to catch a couple of perch or buttermouth—probably the dumbest and hungriest fish in the harbor. And sometimes we'd put small pear or apple wedges onto our hooks and catch smelt and mackerel and an occasional hal-

ibut. Bananas, grapes, peaches, plums, mangoes, oranges—none of them worked, although we once snagged a moray eel with a medium-sized strawberry, and fought him for more than an hour. After the moray snapped the drop line, we talked about how good that strawberry must've been for him to want it so bad. A few times a tightly wadded piece of paper worked to catch a flounder. We caught other things with a button, a cube of stinky cheese, a corner of plywood, and an eyeball from a dead harbor cat. The last several baits were good only when the fish schools jumped like mad and our regular bait had run out and the buckets were near full. Oh, and once we caught a seagull using a chunk of plain bagel that the bird snatched out of midair. We pulled the seagull in like a kite with wild and desperate wings. Removing the hook from its beak shook loose enough feathers for a baby's pillow.

ONE afternoon, as we fought a record-sized bonito and yelled at one another to pull it up, Tom-Su sat to the side and didn't notice or care about the happenings at all; he didn't even budge—just stared straight down at the water. At the time, we thought maybe he was trying to spot the fish moving around beneath the surface, or that maybe his brain shut down on him whenever he took a seat. But not until Tom-Su had fished with us for a good month did we realize that the rocking and the numbed gaze were about something altogether different. Like that fish-head business. Only every so often, when he got a nibble, did he come out of his trance, spring to his feet, and haul his drop line high over his head, fist by fist, until he yanked a fish from the water. Tom-Su then grabbed the fish from its jerking rise, brought it to his mouth in one fast motion, and clamped his teeth right over the fish's head.

THE previous May, Tom-Su and his mother had come to the Barton Hill Elementary principal's office. I'd been caught fighting Lowrider Louie again, this time because I looked at him a second too long, and was sent to the office. Principal Dickerson sent Louie home on his reputation alone. Tom-Su sat in the chair next to mine while his mother spoke to Dickerson at a nearby desk.

"He twelve year old," she said.

"Yes, I know, Mrs. Kim," Dickerson said. "He can't start here this summer or next fall. He's too old. Take him to the junior high—Dana Junior High, okay?"

"Tom-Su have small problem, Mr. Dick'son," she said, and pointed to her temple with a finger. "No big problem; only small problem—very, very small. And no speak English too good."

"Then take him to Harlem Shoemaker, Mrs. Kim," Dickerson said. Harlem Shoemaker was the school for retarded children. "I'm sure they'll have room for him there."

Tom-Su's mother gave a confused look as Dickerson wrote on a piece of paper. I looked at Tom-Su next to me. He had a little drool at the corner of his mouth, and he turned to me and grinned from ear to ear. I smiled back. That was before he ever came fishing with us.

When Tom-Su first moved in, we'd seen him around the projects with his mother. They'd moved into the old Sanchez apartment. It was average and gray-coated, with rough, grimy surfaces and grass yard enough for a three-foot run. There were hundreds of apartments like it in the Rancho San Pedro housing projects. (The Sanchezes had moved back to Mexico, because their youngest son, Julio, had been hit in the head by a stray bullet. It had traveled five or six blocks before getting to Julio.) Each time we'd seen Tom-Su, he'd been stuck glue-tight to his mother, moving beside her like a shrunken shadow of a person. As if he were scared of the sunlight. Sometimes they'd even been seen holding hands, at which point we knew something wasn't right. A mother and son holding hands? In our neighborhood it was unheard-of.

"... it's for special cases like Tom-Su," Dickerson said, handing her the note.

"No, no," his mother said, "not right school. Please. Tom-Su father no like; he get so so mad."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Kim," Dickerson said.

THAT night a terrible screaming argument that all of the Ranch heard busted out in Tom-Su's apartment. The father mostly lost his lid and spit out one non-understandable sentence after another, sounding like an out-of-control Uzi. The only word we were hip to, which came up again and again, was "Tom-Su." The mother got in a few high-pitched words of her own, but mostly she seemed to take the bullet-shot sentences left, right, left, right. Whenever the mother spoke, we would hear a muffled, wailing cry that pricked every inch of our skin. The cries came from Tom-Su. The father, we guessed, must not've wanted his son at Harlem Shoemaker; he must've taken the suggestion as deeply personal, a negative on his name. We didn't understand why Mr. Kim had to rip into his family the way he did. Or how yelling could help any. Anyway, Harlem Shoemaker had a huge indoor swimming pool that we thought should've evened things up some.

On our walk to the Pink Building the next morning we discovered a blank-faced Mrs. Kim and a stone-faced Mr. Kim in the street in front of their apartment. Tom-Su stood by the door and watched them with an unshakable grin on his mug. Once, he looked our way as if casting a spell on us. Mrs. Kim had a suitcase by her side and a bag on her shoulder; she spoke quietly to Mr. Kim, but she was looking up the street. Mr. Kim, though, glared hard at the side of her head, as if he were going to bite her ear off. Then a taxi drove up, which made Mr. Kim grab her arm. He clipped some words hard into her ear as she struggled to free herself. They were quickly sep-

arated by the taxi driver, who kept Mr. Kim from his wife as she scooted into the back of the taxi and locked the door. When the cabbie let him go, Mr. Kim stepped to the taxi and tried to open the door. The Kims stared at each other through the window glass as the driver trunked the suitcase, got into the driver's seat, and drove off. Mr. Kim watched the taxi head down the street and out of sight. Then he walked up to his apartment, stopped at the door, and stared into the eyes of his son, who for some unknown reason maintained his grin. Together they looked nuttier than peanut butter. Mr. Kim glared at Tom-Su for nearly two minutes and then said one quick non-English brick of a word and smacked him on the top of the head. Tom-Su bolted indoors. Abuse like that made us glad we didn't have men in our homes.

We continued our walk to the Pink Building.

It was the next day that Tom-Su attached himself to our group for the first time. We'd stopped at the doughnut shack at Sixth Street and Harbor Boulevard and continued on with a dozen plus doughnut holes. Then we strolled along the railroad tracks for Deadman's Slip, but after spotting Tom-Su sneaking along behind us, we derailed ourselves toward the boxcars.

The railroad tracks ran between Harbor Boulevard and the waterfront. The same gray-white rocks filled every space between the wooden crossties. At Sixth and Harbor the tracks branched into four, and on the two middle tracks were the boxcars. Just to our right the Beacon Street Park sat on a good-sized hillside and stretched a ten-block length of Harbor Boulevard. From its green high ground you could see clear to Long Beach. To our left a fence separated the railway from the water.

Several times during the walk we turned our heads and spotted Tom-Su following us, foolishly scrambling for cover whenever he thought he'd been seen. Twice we stayed still and waited for him to come out from his hiding place, but only a small speck of forehead peeked around the corner. At the last boxcar we jumped to the side and climbed on its roof, laid ourselves on our stomachs, and waited to be found. When Tom-Su reached our boxcar, he walked to the front of it, looking up the tracks and then all around. Suddenly pure wonder showed itself on his face. They became air, his expression said. Poof! He turned to look back, side to side, and then straight up the empty tracks again—nothing. Staring into the distance, he stood like a wind-slumped post. Half a mile of rail and rocks, and he waited for a hint to the mystery. I'm sure up on the roof we all had the exact same thought: why doesn't he check out the boxcar? Under it, in it, on it. It never crossed Tom-Su's mind, though, to suspect a trick. As far as he was concerned, we were magicians who'd straight evaporated ourselves! The wonder on his face was stuck there. Then we started to laugh from up high. Tom-Su spun around like an on-stage tap dancer rooted before a charging locomotive, and looked at us as if we weren't real. Once again he glanced around and into the empty distance. We could disappear, fly

onto boxcars, and sneak up behind him without a rattle. When he looked up at us again, all the wonder had reappeared and poured into his eyes. A click later he'd busted into a buck-toothed smile and clapped his hands hard like a seal, turning us into a volcano of laughter. We took him along.

As a morning ritual we climbed the nearest tarp-covered and twice-our-height mountain of fishing nets at Deadman's Slip. The nets usually belonged to the boat *Mary Ellen*, from San Pedro. Up on *Mary Ellen*'s nets our doughnuts vanished piece by piece as we watched straggler boats heading into or back from the Pacific Ocean. All the while the yellow-and-orange-beaked seagulls stared at us as if waiting for the world to flinch.

SO the summer went. It was a nice rhythm. During the walks Tom-Su joined up with us without fail somewhere between the projects and the harbor. On the mornings we decided to head to Terminal Island or Twenty-second Street instead of to the Pink Building, we never told Tom-Su and never had to. We didn't tell him because he somehow knew what direction we'd go in, as if he'd picked up our scent. Early on we stopped turning our heads to look for him closing from behind. We knew he'd find us. As we met, Tom-Su simply merged with our group without saying a word; he just checked who held the buckets, took hold of them, and carried them the rest of the way. We knew that having a conversation with Tom-Su was impossible, though sometimes he'd say two or three words about a question one of us asked him. Words that meant something and nothing at the same time.

The first few days, Tom-Su didn't catch a fish. In fact, he didn't seem to know what it was we were doing. He didn't seem to care either—just sat alone, taking in the watery world ten feet below the Pink Building's wharf. Meanwhile, we cut pieces of bait and baited hooks, dropped lines and did or didn't pull in a wiggler. Tom-Su was and wasn't a part of the situation. Not until day four did he lower a drop line of his own. And even though he'd already been along for three days, he had no clue how to bait his hook. So we took it upon ourselves to get him up to speed. For the rest of that day nobody got the smallest nibble, which was rare at the Pink Building. It made us wonder whether Tom-Su was bad luck. We discussed it and decided that thinking that way was itself bad luck. We went home fishless.

The next day we set Tom-Su up, sat down, and focused on our drop lines. For a while nobody said anything. We didn't want a repeat of the day before. Usually if no one got a bite, we'd choose to play different baits or move to a new spot in the harbor. But a couple of clicks later neither bait nor location concerned us any longer. Our new friend, so to speak, had expressed himself.

Tom-Su had been silent and calm as always. Then he got a tug on his line and jumped to his feet. He shot a freaked-out look our way. The next tug threw his rubbery legs off-balance,

and he almost let go of the drop line. He reacted as if something were trying to pull him into the water.

We yelled for him to start to pull the line up—and he did! He'd understood us. We yelled and yelled, and he pulled and pulled, as if he were saving his own life by doing so. The fish sprang into the air. It was a big, beautiful mackerel. Tom-Su wrapped his hand around the fish, popped the hook from its mouth like an expert, and took the fish's head straight into his mouth. Before we could say anything, we heard a loud skeleton crunch, and the mackerel went from a tail-whipping side-to-side to a curved stiffness. Tom-Su removed the fish from his mouth and spit the head onto the ground. Some light-red blood eased down his chin from the corners of his mouth, along with some strandy mackerel innards. Fish slime shined on his lips. Needless to say, our minds were blown away. Tom-Su stood before us lost and confused, as if he had no clue what had just happened. Then he wiped his mouth and chin with the pulled-up bottom of his shirt. He had no idea that the faces in front of him had fascination written all over them, not to mention more than a crumb of worry. Suddenly, though, Tom-Su broke into his broadest, toothiest grin ever. "Dead already," was all he said. Then he started to laugh and clap his hands like a seal, and it was so goofy-looking that we joined his lead and got to laughing ourselves. I mean, if he could laugh at himself, why couldn't we join him? Eventually we'd get used to the gore.

We tossed the chewed-into mackerel into the empty bucket and headed back to our drop lines, but not before we set Tom-Su up in his private spot. Maybe it was mean of us, but we didn't put any bait onto his hook that day. Nobody was in a rush to see another fish at the end of Tom-Su's line. Tom-Su sat off to the side and stared at the water, as if dying of thirst. Only once did he lift his head, to the sight of two gray-black pigeons flapping through the harbor sky. He wasn't bad luck, we agreed—just a bit freaky.

We caught a good many perch, buttermouth, and mackerel that day. On the walk to the fish market and then to the Ranch we kept looking over at Tom-Su, expecting him to do something strange. Like fall to the ground and shake like an earthquake, hammer his head against a boxcar, or run into speeding traffic on Harbor Boulevard. But he was his usual goofy mellow, though once or twice we could've sworn he sneaked a knowing peek our way—as if to say he understood exactly what he'd done to the mackerel and how it had shaken us. But mostly we looked at him and saw this crooked and dizzy face next to us.

THE next day Tom-Su caught up with us on the railroad tracks. On the right side of his forehead was a red, knuckle-sized bump. Tom-Su walked with his eyes fastened to every crosstie at his feet. When he saw a few of us balancing eagle-armed on a thin rail, he tried it and fell right on his backside. As soon as he hit the ground, he did his hand clap, and we broke out in laughter.



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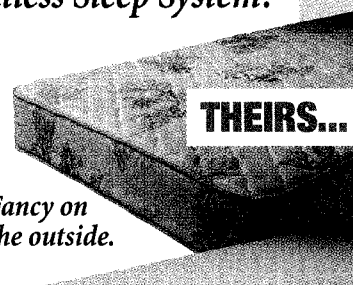
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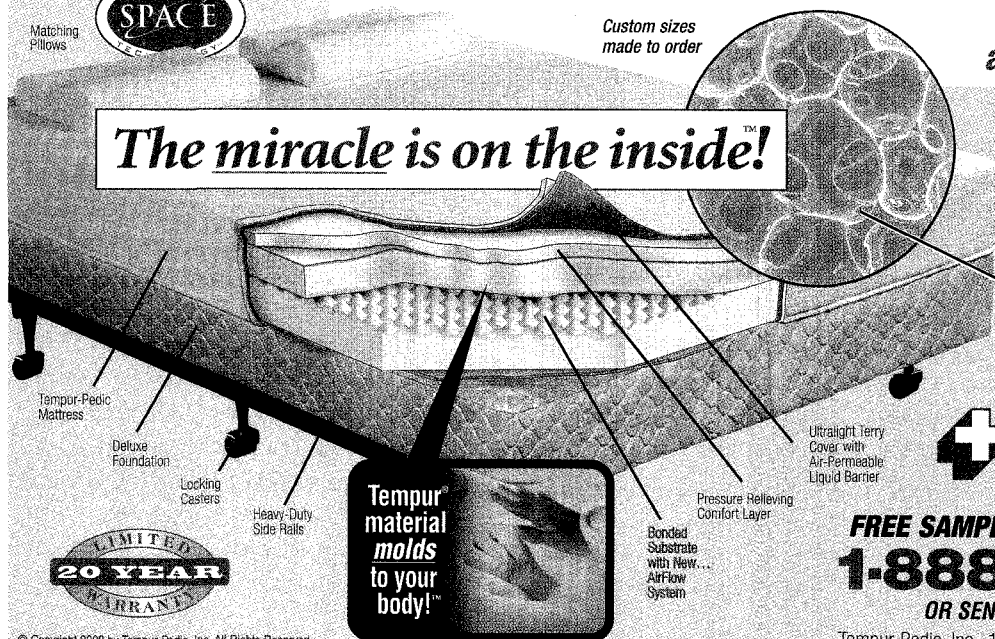
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The day after, a Sunday, we didn't go fishing. Instead we caught the RTD at First and Pacific for downtown L. A. At City Hall we transferred to the shuttle bus for Dodger Stadium. The Dodgers against the Mets would replace the fish for a day—if we could get discount tickets. During the bus ride we wondered what Tom-Su was up to, whether he'd gone out and searched for us or not.

MONDAY morning we ran into Tom-Su waiting for us on the railroad tracks. He had a black eye. He also had trouble looking at us—as if he were ashamed of the shiner. A couple of us put an arm around him to let him know he'd be all right in our company. He might've understood. We did the same a few days later, when a forehead bump showed again, along with an arm bruise. As Tom-Su strolled beside us, we agreed that the next time, Pops would pay a price. We would become Tom-Su's insurance policy. Pops would step from his door one morning and get cracked on both temples and then hammered on with a two-by-four for a minute or so. In our book, being a father didn't mean he could be disrespectful. Luckily, we saw no more bruises. But compared with what was to come, the bruises had been nothing.

SOMETIME in the middle of August we sat on the tarp-covered netting as usual. The sky was dull from a low marine layer clinging fast to the coastline. Tom-Su popped a doughnut hole into his mouth and took in the world around him. At times he and a seagull connected eyes for a very long minute or two. They seemed perfectly alone with each other. Then we noticed a figure at the beginning of Deadman's, snooping around the fishing boats and the tarps lying next to them. We shook Tom-Su from his stare-down, slid off *Mary Ellen's* netting, grabbed our buckets, and broke for the back of the Pink Building. Then we crossed the tracks, sneaked between warehouses, and waited at the end of Twenty-second Street. An hour later we knew he wouldn't find us—or his son.

Tom-Su's father came looking again the next morning, and again we slid down *Mary Ellen's* stack and jetted for Twenty-second Street. Pops must've gotten hip to his son's fish smell, we thought, or had some crazy scenting ability that ran in the family. How Tom-Su got out of his apartment we never learned.

The next day we rowed to Terminal Island and headed to Berth 300, where we knew Pops would leave us alone. By our third day at 300, though, the fish had thinned out terribly, and because we had to row back across in the late afternoon, when the port was at its busiest, we needed more time to get to the fish market with our measly catches. We became frustrated with everything except the diving pelicans, though to be honest they got on our nerves once or twice with all the fun they

were having. They caught ten to twenty fish to our one. Even the trailer birds had more success, robbing from the overflow. We decided to go back to the other side.

The next morning Pops didn't show himself at Deadman's Slip. After we finished our doughnuts, we strolled to the back wharf of the Pink Building, dropped our gear, unrolled our drop lines, baited hooks, and lowered the lines. The water below spread before us still and clear and flat, like a giant mirror. On its far surface you could see the upside down of Terminal Island's cranes and dry docks. Every fifteen minutes or so a ship loaded with autos, containers, or other cargo lumbered into port, so the longshoremen could make their money. The big ships were the only vessels to disturb the surface that day. As our heads followed one especially humungous banana ship moving toward the inner harbor, we suddenly spotted Tom-Su's father at the entrance to the Pink Building. He hadn't seen us yet. One of us grabbed Tom-Su by the head, shaking him from his deep water-trance, and turned him toward the entrance. His eyes focused and refocused several times on the figure at the end of the wharf. A second later Tom-Su shot down the wharf ladder, saying "No, no, no" until he'd disappeared from sight.

The father's lonely figure moved along the wharf, arms stiff at his sides and hands pushed into jacket pockets. Even from a distance his neck looked rock-hard and ruler-straight; his steps were quick and choppy. We said just a couple of things to each other before he reached us: that he looked madder than a zoo gorilla, and that if he got even a little bit crazy, we'd tackle him, beat him until he cried, and then toss his out-of-line ass into the harbor.

At ten feet he stopped and looked us each in the face. If he took another step forward, we'd rush him. But he stood still. His belly had a small paunch, his jet-black hair was combed, thick, and shiny, and his face was sad and mean, together. While the father stood still and hard, he checked our buckets and drop lines like a dock detective. Suddenly I thought that Tom-Su might go into shock if we threw his father into the water. Instead maybe we'd just beat him and drag him along the ground for a good stretch. We waited.

After he'd thoroughly examined our goods, he again checked our faces one by one. We didn't move. Pops let out a snort and moved sideways to the edge of the wharf, where he looked below and side to side. When we did the same, we saw that he saw nothing. Then he turned and walked toward the entrance—which was now his exit. When he'd finally faded from sight, we called below for Tom-Su to come up top, but we heard no movement. Again we called, and again we heard not a sound. When one of us said the word "drowned," we all climbed down to pull Tom-Su from the water. Once we were underneath, though, we found Tom-Su with his back to us, sitting on a plank held between two pilings. He was bending close to the water. When we moved around him, we froze at what we saw Tom-Su looking at on the water. We didn't want to startle him. Tom-Su's hand traced over a flat reflection,

careful not to touch the surface. The reflection was his own face in the water, but it was a regular and way less crooked face than the one looking down at it. As a matter of fact, it looked like Tom-Su's handsome twin brother. Its eyes showed intelligence, and the teeth had fully lost their buck. Overall, though, the face was Tom-Su's—but without the tilted dizziness. The face and the water and Tom-Su were in a dream of their own that we came upon by accident. We watched as Tom-Su traced his hand over the water face. Suddenly, when the wave of a ship flooded in and soaked our shoes and pant legs, Tom-Su pulled his hand back as if from a fire and then plunged it into the water over and over again. It was the same

crazy jerking motion he made after he got a tug on his drop line. When he was done grabbing at the water, he turned to see us crouched beside him.

Up on the wharf we pulled in fish after fish for hours. The fog had lifted while we were down below, and the sun had bleached the waterfront. Every once in a while we'd look over at a blood-stained Tom-Su, who was hanging out with his twin brother. Around him were the headless bodies of a perch and two mackerel that had briefly disturbed their relationship. After we filled our buckets, we rolled up the drop lines, shook Tom-Su from his stupor, and headed for the San Pedro fish market. On the walk we kept staring at Tom-Su from the cor-

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE SOUL

A soul is something we have every now and then.
Nobody has one all the time
or forever.

Day after day,
year after year,
can go by without one.

Only sometimes in rapture
or in the fears of childhood
it nests a little longer.
Only sometimes in the wonderment
that we are old.

It rarely assists us
during tiresome tasks,
such as moving furniture,
carrying suitcases,
or traveling on foot in shoes too tight.

When we're filling out questionnaires
or chopping meat
it's usually given time off.

Out of our thousand conversations
it participates in one,
and even that isn't a given,
for it prefers silence.

When the body starts to ache and ache
it quietly steals from its post.

It's choosy:
not happy to see us in crowds,
sickened by our struggle for any old advantage
and the drone of business dealings.

It doesn't see joy and sorrow
as two different feelings.
It is with us
only in their union.
We can count on it
when we're not sure of anything
and curious about everything.

Of all material objects
it likes grandfather clocks
and mirrors, which work diligently
even when no one is looking.

It doesn't state where it comes from
or when it will vanish again,
but clearly it awaits such questions.

Evidently,
just as we need it,
it can also use us
for something.

—WISLAWA SZYMBORSKA,
translated by JOANNA TRZECIAK

ners of our eyes. His bad features seemed ten times more noticeable. His teeth were now a train cowcatcher, his eyes two tar-pit traps, and his drool a waterfall. At the fish market, locals surrounded our buckets, and after twenty minutes we'd sold our full catch, three fish at a time. We split up the money and washed our hands in the fish-market restroom. Back outside we realized that Tom-Su was missing. We searched for him along the waterfront for what felt like a day, but came up empty. We went back to the Ranch.

In the morning we walked along the tracks, a couple of us throwing rocks as far down the railway yard as we could. At the last boxcar we discovered the door completely open. Somebody was snoring loud inside. We peeked in and saw Tom-Su, lying on his side in the corner, his face pressed against the wall. When we jumped in and woke him, he gave us his ear-to-ear grin. Since the same bloodstained shirt was on his back, we knew he hadn't gone home.

The next several mornings we picked Tom-Su up from his boxcar, and on *Mary Ellen's* netting let him eat as many doughnuts as he wanted. We fished at the Pink Building, pulled in our buckets full, heard the fish heads come off crunch, crunch, crunch, and sold our catch in front of the fish market. We brought Tom-Su soap and made him wash up at the public restroom, got him a hamburger and fries from the nearby diner, and walked him back to the boxcar. We also found him a good blanket.

Once or twice we'd seen Pops stepping along the waterfront, talking to people he bumped into. Tom-Su, we knew, had to be careful. But except for his crashing in the boxcar, things felt pretty good to us: the fish were biting well behind the Pink Building, and we were bothered by no one from early morning until late afternoon, when the sky got sleepy and dull. At those moments we sometimes had the urge to walk to Point Fermin to watch the sun ease fiery red into the Pacific, just to the right of Catalina Island. From the harbor side of Deadman's Slip we mostly missed all of that.

ONE morning we came to the boxcar and found that Tom-Su was gone. He wasn't in any of the other boxcars either. We continued along the tracks to Deadman's and downed our doughnuts on *Mary Ellen's* netting, all the while scanning the railway yard and waterfront for Tom-Su's gangly movement. We saved his doughnuts and headed for the wharf. Later we settled with the only local at the fish market, and then stopped by the boxcar on the way to the Ranch. He still hadn't shown. After waiting till dusk, we left him the bag of doughnuts and a few dollars. It was the end of August.

That whole week before school was to start, Tom-Su seemed to have dropped completely out of sight. The doughnuts and money hadn't been touched. We decided that he'd eventually find us. Once or twice, though, one of us climbed under the wharf to make sure he wasn't hanging with the twin.

Then we decided he must've moved back in with his mother, or maybe returned to Korea.

The Sunday morning before school started, we were headed to the Pink Building for the last time that summer. The project's streets were completely still except for a small cluster of people gathered in front of Tom-Su's apartment. From a block away we stood and watched the goings-on. A cab pulled up next to the crowd, and a woman stepped out. It was Tom-Su's mother, Mrs. Kim. She walked to the apartment, and we headed toward the crowd.

THAT summer we'd learned early on never to turn around and check to see if Tom-Su was coming up behind us during our walks to the fishing spots. If we did, he'd just jump out of sight and then peek around a corner, believing he was invisible. Or he'd be waiting for us at the boxcar or the netting. He could be anywhere. But that last morning, after we'd left the crowd in front of Tom-Su's place and made our way to the Pink Building, we kept turning our heads to catch him before he fully disappeared. Each time we'd see something unusual and tell ourselves it was a piece of him. Once he looked like the edge of a drainpipe, another time the bumper of a car parked among a dozen others, and yet another time a baseball cap riding by on a bus. Anywhere but inside the smaller of the two body bags that were carried out the front door of the apartment that morning. It couldn't have been him, we decided, because the bag was way too little between the grown men carrying it out. When we heard the maintenance man talk about a double hanging, we were amazed, sure; but as we headed down the railroad tracks and passed the boxcar, we were convinced he was still hiding out somewhere along the waterfront. Plus, the doughnuts and money had been taken.

AT the Pink Building we sat for a good hour and got not a single nibble. The silence around us was broken into only by a passing seagull, which yapped over and over again until it rose up and faded from sight. We stared into the water below and wondered if we shouldn't head for another spot. Suddenly, though, one of us got a bite and started to pull and pull at the drop line, with the rest of us yelling like mad, but just as we were about to grab for the fish, the drop line snapped.

As the morning turned to afternoon and the afternoon to night, we talked with excitement about the next summer. As the seagulls and pelicans settled on the roof because they'd grown tired of the day, we gathered our gear but couldn't speak anymore, because the summer was already done. And as the birds on the roof called sad and lonely into the harbor, a single star showed itself in the everywhere spread of night above.

We stood on the edge of the wharf and looked down at the faces staring up at us. ☸





The World Streaming In

*Free, easy-to-use software
turns any PC into the greatest shortwave
set there ever was*

YOUR taste for serendipity will be tested over the next few years. Radio turns out to mate easily with digital technology, opening up whole new worlds. Just this morning, for instance, I've listened to a (terrible) band called Salmonella Dub on station bFM from Auckland, New Zealand; a weather forecast for Alberta; the top forty from São Paulo; jazz from Newark. But you can also use the technology to narrow

your world and make sure you'll never hear anything disconcerting again—a use that might endanger public, college, and community radio stations, all that good stuff at the left end of the dial. What you look for will depend on the value you place on the local, the particular, the immediate—on the funky in all its forms. The only tool you need is a copy of RealPlayer or Windows Media Player, software that more than 100 million peo-

ple already use (and that is free in its basic versions; the upgrades that RealPlayer encourages you to buy don't seem to add much to the free version). Once you've got one of these programs, you can listen to any audio on the Web—sound, unlike video, requires only limited bandwidth. Hundreds of "Internet only" radio stations have sprung up, including gogaga.com, WWW.com, and NetRadio.com, which boasts 120 "channels" subdivided into remarkably narrow segments. Classical fans can baroque around the clock or concentrate on chant; rock fans can decide between "Fab 60s" and "Pre Fab 60s." You listen through the speakers on your desktop computer—this is music for cubicles. And by year's end it will be music for cars. Sirius Satellite Radio will soon be standard in many Fords, using satellites to "stream" channels playing nothing but New Age, opera, blues, country, alternative. For a monthly fee you'll be able to push the button preset for opera and hear endless arias, uninterrupted by commercials.

The sound quality will be unimpeachable—no fading in and out as you crest

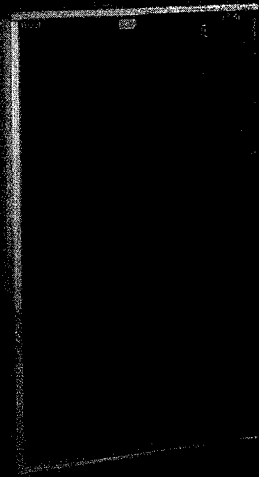
by Bill McKibben

hills. In fact, you may very well stop listening to classical music on your local public-radio station, which means that you won't be tuned in at fundraising time, which means the station might go out of business. The thought has certainly occurred to National Public Radio, which has agreed to provide programming for two nationwide NPR channels over Sirius Satellite Radio but has refused to license the two biggest ones, *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*, for fear of losing too many listeners.

All reggae all the time exacts another cost: although it's efficient to listen to the kind of music or talk you already know you like and nothing else, it's also a little dull, or at least parochial. That is to say, one of the glories of public radio, as of any neighborhood, is its inefficiency—the fact that because it offers all sorts of things to all sorts of people, it obliges you to expose yourself to the tastes of the people around you. Maybe you'll hear something about the local schools, or the local nursing home; maybe you'll hear zouk music before opera comes on. Commercial AM and FM have already achieved near-total homogenization. A distributor in Texas or California, say, sends prepackaged oldies or conservative bluster or "adult contemporary" out across thousands of stations—satellite radio with commercials. With regular broadcast radio there weren't enough opera fans in Boston or Louisville to support an all-opera station, so Pavarotti fans sometimes had to suffer through Joshua Redman. Now they won't unless they want to.

DIGITAL radio can widen your world as well as narrow it. To imagine how far, you perhaps need to have hovered over a shortwave set in your childhood, trying to coax in the distant signals of Radio Luxembourg, intrigued by the idea that there were other, perhaps more interesting, places you could conjure up out of the ether. There's no more waiting for nightfall, worrying about sunspots, stringing antennas out the window—all of a sudden the computer has turned into the greatest shortwave set there ever was. Visit a site called comfm.fr and you can choose from 3,619 stations (by the time you try it, the number will doubtless have topped 4,000). About two thousand of these broadcast from the United States, but you can also hear Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Tanzanian broadcasts. Radio

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Aurally, anyone can now live in, say, Boston, which has a dozen college stations, three of them great: WMBR, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (check out Sunday evening's *R&B Jukebox*); WERS, at Emerson College (*Gyroscope* offers three hours of world music every weekday afternoon); and WHRB, at Harvard, locally famous for the exam-period "orgies" it broadcasts twice a year (last winter every note Bach wrote, continuously for ten days). If your local public-radio station plays nothing but classical music, you can now tune in KCRW, the NPR outlet in Santa Monica, which offers *Morning Becomes Eclectic*—perhaps the most gorgeously idiosyncratic music program in the country (Beck, Cassandra Wilson, Jacques Brel, back to back)—and also lots of original radio drama, not to mention satire from Harry Shearer.

What makes this programming wonderful is that it's local, made for particular people in particular places—or, to put it the other way around, that it's not made for everyone everywhere, like TV. Radio is cheap to produce. *This American Life*, the weekly documentary show from WBEZ, in Chicago, that beats anything else on the public-radio schedule, costs less than \$20,000 an hour to produce and transmit—a sum that will buy just half the opening credits for any TV show. Because it is cheap, radio allows you either to make a great deal of money selling commercials—urban licenses routinely go for tens of millions of dollars—or, if you don't care about profit, to make whatever kind of program you want. There's no need to gather a vast audience: with some of a school's student-activities fee or a few thousand loyal, pledging listeners, you can cover the costs of a radio station. The Internet is cheap too. Warp radio.com, for instance, will Webcast a station's signal in exchange for only two minutes of advertising time a day. For very little incremental cost any local station can suddenly reach a global audience.

Ever since Marshall McLuhan coined the term, people have taken "global vil-

lage" to mean that there would one day be a single planetary culture. Indeed, that's what came about as TV spread around the world, doing its best to create a global American suburb. Even TV's "local news" looks as if it were filmed and beamed out from some central studio.

The Internet, combined with radio, offers the possibility of a different model—many communities you can look in on from time to time. You wouldn't want to spend all your time in them: Tamil radio doesn't, in the end, have that much to do with how you live. But there is something delightful about hearing what interests local people in far-flung places. It's the difference between staying in a bed-and-breakfast and staying in a resort.

THE digital revolution has another gift to offer radio. It changes not only the way radio is transmitted but also the way it is made. Say you want to produce a small report for a radio station, the way people have always written columns for their local newspapers. In the past this was complicated. Even if you were doing a straightforward commentary, you usually had to either travel to the station (sound suffers as it comes across the phone lines) or mail in a tape. To do anything more elaborate—lay in music in the background, piece together quotations from your neighbors—you needed an elaborate suite of editing equipment and the almost mystical ability to cut tape with razor blades and piece it back together, removing the *ums* and preserving the words you wanted. Five years ago the walls of the control room in any good local public-radio station were covered with segments of tape waiting to be spliced into essays. Now in the same control room there are instead a couple of Gateways or Macs. Tape is nearly dead.

My daughter and I spent several weeks last year interviewing our neighbors in the Adirondack Mountains, in New York, recording hailstorms and waterfalls, interrogating each other as we climbed high peaks. Our Sony MZ-R55 recorder, no bigger than a pack of playing cards, weighs a few ounces, and all of our summer's work fit on a dozen mini-discs (think of them as compact compact discs) that can be fed into any computer equipped with a sound card, using a two-dollar cable from Radio Shack. With software you can download for a small fee, you can edit the sound almost as easily as you can edit

words in a word-processing program (try the shareware program CoolEdit 2000 or, for Macs, Sound Studio).

When you're finished, you can convert your meditation on the summer's first swim into an MP3 file and e-mail it to your local station; it will emerge sounding as crisp and clear as anything else on the radio. In the past, when high-quality equipment was expensive and the required skills arcane, there were very few prominent radio producers. Anyone who listens to *All Things Considered* will recognize their names: Jay Allison, David Isay, the Kitchen Sisters. But now, at least in theory, the technical obstacles have diminished enough that anyone who loves the sound of the human voice and owns a computer built in the past five years can join the ranks. Already you can hear the results on our local public-radio station: freed of cutting tape, correspondents turn out more—and more daring—work, and new voices crop up. Jay Allison will later this year inaugurate a new Web site, Transom.org, that invites anyone to send in an attempt at making radio; a rotating group of pros will critique the pieces, award prizes to the best ones, and send as many of them as possible on to *All Things Considered* and other national shows. "We're going to use the Net to cast a net," Allison says. "There are so many stories out there just waiting to be told."

Done on the cheap, TV looks terrible—the garish, shabby amateur hour that is public-access cable in any city in the country, unwatched except by friends and family. Radio can't be done except on the cheap, and with a \$150 microphone (try the Electro-Voice 635A) anyone can make it sound just fine. If you want to make it sound magnificent, you need the insight of a good writer, and a few technical tricks besides. Ira Glass, the man behind *This American Life*, last year produced a comic book designed for tyro producers: "Radio: An Illustrated Guide" (visit thislife.org to order copies). It covers everything from story structure to how to make people comfortable when you're sticking a mike in their faces. It ends with a note from Glass, the man who made the airwaves safe for normal voices: "Radio is boring when the people on the air just want to sound like everyone else. The people who are the most fun to listen to—from Paul Harvey to Terry Gross—they sound only like themselves. Everyone should try it." ☸



As American as Cricket

A movement has been growing to bring what was once the most English of sports into the American mainstream. It might just succeed

THE American cricket season had entered its penultimate week last fall, and Manish Prabhu, Microsoft Cricket Club's most gifted player, was praying that his team would win the Northwest Cricket League championship. For that to happen, Indo-Pak Cricket Club had to upset Seattle Cricket Club, Microsoft's main rival, in a game then in progress at Fort Dent Park, in Seattle. A cricket fan ever since I was a child in South Africa, I

by Rob Nixon

watched the game with Prabhu from the sidelines. Mid-conversation he broke into applause as a burly Indian software engineer thumped a ball over our heads. It bounced off a Jeep Cherokee and disappeared into the parking lot beyond.

The scene around us seemed airlifted straight out of England: blackberry bushes lined a leafy lane, a humpbacked stone bridge spanned a stream, cricketers clad in pristine white dotted the willow-

edged park. Even the weather felt right. Rain had been forecast, but the sun had sheared through the clouds to deliver an immaculate blue day, as rare in Seattle as in Yorkshire.

Fort Dent, five minutes from Sea-Tac Airport, is the hub of American cricket's renaissance. Every weekend from April through September engineers, chefs, post-doctoral fellows, taxi drivers, and paper-pulp moguls gather at Fort Dent to play and talk cricket. Their conversations, as often as not, turn to the prospect of converting cricket into an American game.

Most Americans view cricket as quintessentially, unfathomably English—less a sport than an eccentric kind of picnic, and as baffling as wallpaper on the ceiling and “spotted dick” on dessert menus. But cricket is no longer particularly English. For one thing, the English are no longer so very good at it: they currently rank a wretched eighth out of nine among the major cricket-playing nations. Cricket's epicenter has shifted decisively from England to South Asia. Now enterprising South Asian immigrants are eager to make the United States a force in world cricket.

As we sat beneath the wind-tousled willows, Manish Prabhu described the new energy that the Indian diaspora has brought to the game. Microsoft's Redmond campus has about 15,000 employees. Some 2,000 of them are South Asian immigrants. Most of the immigrants, like Prabhu, are software-development engineers. Together with a smattering of Australians, South Africans, and Englishmen at Microsoft, the South Asian engineers constitute a serious cricket subculture. Microsoft evidently understands that cricket makes them happy: it pays the league fees for its employees' teams.

Prabhu joined Microsoft—the corporation and the cricket team—in 1996. Now twenty-eight, he is at the peak of his cricketing prowess—and of his dedication. When he can't find bowlers (pitchers) to practice with, he improvises with a baseball pitching machine. But it's a frustrating compromise. In cricket the ball is supposed to bounce off the ground before reaching the batter. It's supposed to swing and spin unpredictably, with variable speed, not just through the air but off the grass as well. A pitch from a baseball machine is lackluster, offering only move-

ment through the air, and is consequently too easy for a cricketer to hit.

It is only natural to compare cricket with its domestic rival. After work Prabhu and his colleagues practice cricket on a field that adjoins a baseball diamond. When night descends, Prabhu finds himself gazing enviously at the baseball players' expensive floodlights, their batting cage, the perfectly level green. "Someday that could be us," he said to me. "I've told my wife that when I make money, the first thing I'll do is build an excellent cricket field. The thing is, if I keep playing this much cricket, I'll never make that much money."

What would make the biggest difference to cricket in America? His response was instant: "Seeing cricket, lots of it, on TV. Not just pay-per-view, like now." Prabhu recalled journeying as a boy from Bombay to his grandmother's village, a place that electricity hadn't yet reached. He would try to play cricket with the village children, but they weren't interested. When he returned to that village recently, electricity and TV had made a difference. "The kids were playing the game every minute, everywhere," he said. "Now they can see cricket wherever it is being played in the world, nonstop on television. But you know the best thing for cricket in America?" he added, his eyes twinkling. "Get Bill Gates's kids involved."

Prabhu grimaced and fell silent: an Indo-Pak fielder had dropped a straightforward catch near the boundary. Seattle Cricket Club was headed for certain victory. Together we watched Microsoft's hope of taking the championship go into hibernation until the spring.

"SERIOUS sport," George Orwell once wrote, is "war minus the shooting." This is nowhere truer than in the cricket stadiums of South Asia, where the line between the region's military conflicts and the passions stirred by cricket victories and defeats can be razor-thin. Tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and nuclear testing have spilled over into cricket, resulting in riots, fans' deaths, and the ravaging of cricket fields. Such volatility has forced the two nations' teams to stage most of their contests in distant, neutral venues such as Toronto and Saudi Arabia.

When India defeated Pakistan in 1996, traumatized Pakistan supporters accused their team's captain, Wasim Akram, who had withdrawn because of an injury

shortly before the game, of folding under pressure from a betting syndicate. Vengeful fans kidnapped Akram's father and held him hostage for several days. (In light of such an incident, Seattle's "Indo-Pak Cricket Club" sounds like a magic-realist joke in a Salman Rushdie novel. It's as if a Cold War-era hockey team had called itself the Soviet-Americans.)

In the four cricket-besotted nations of South Asia—Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh—the sport knows no equal as a repository of virulent patriotism. When the Bangladeshi team pulled off a shock upset of Pakistan last year in the Cricket World Cup, in England, millions of Bangladeshis took to the streets to celebrate. Some waved banners declaring PAKISTAN'S SECOND DEFEAT: 1971 & 1999—a reference to the war between East and West Pakistan that led to the creation of Bangladesh. When Sri Lanka played South Africa during the Cricket World Cup, Tamil secessionists hired a plane to fly over the cricket stadium trailing the words SOUTH AFRICA, WE TAMILS SUPPORT YOU. To Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority, such an act was tantamount to treason.

Fort Dent Park is quite a distance from South Asia's impassioned geopolitics. Yet in the past few years some of that energy, stripped of its bitter factionalism, has unquestionably begun to invigorate the American game. One early-fall day I returned to Fort Dent to talk to U.S. cricket's most erudite, indefatigable campaigner, Deb K. Das.

Das emigrated from Delhi by way of Cambridge University, arriving in Seattle in 1962. He holds a master's in economics and works as a long-range energy forecaster for the city of Seattle. But cricket remains his first love. Das is the U.S. coordinator of cricinfo.com, the world's largest cricket Web site. Along with the predictable match schedules and reports, the site offers a treasure trove of arcana: a summary of cricket's thousand-year-old ancestry, the composition of the 1930s Hollywood team that toured Canada (it included Errol Flynn, Boris Karloff, and Nigel Bruce), and an exhaustive cricket-to-baseball dictionary—a magisterial work of translation.

Together Das and I watched the seemingly invincible Seattle pulverize Portland. I asked Das how big he thought cricket could get in America.

"You must understand," he said, "this

is not something new. Cricket has been played in Seattle for over a hundred years, and in places like Boston and Philadelphia for far longer than that. In the 1850s cricket was the most popular team sport in America. At Bloomingdale Park, in New York, ten thousand spectators would spend a hundred and fifty thousand dollars—a fortune back then—gambling on the outcome of a cricket match."

American cricket's finest hour to date came on January 5, 1888, when C. L. Bixby, of Boston's Longwood Cricket Club, led the United States to victory over the fabled West Indies cricket team. But as cricket went professional in England and Australia in the 1880s, it remained on an amateur footing in America. By the 1920s it had been eclipsed by the secessionist sport of baseball.

Deb Das is hopeful that the sport can reclaim some of its former glory in this country. "We may never have a cricket Big Ten in America," he told me. "But if you're thinking soccer, even tennis, yes, we can get to that level. Twenty years ago soccer was as foreign as cricket is today. Then they introduced it as an alternate sport in elementary school. This is our challenge: to get it on TV and into schools. And have cricket camps for American kids."

Das recounted how in the past eighteen months Mike Miller, a former club cricketer from London, had launched a pilot program to take the sport into California schools. The kids' enthusiasm has persuaded the United States of America Cricket Association (USACA) that it can generate for cricket a grassroots culture comparable to soccer's, lifting the sport beyond its immigrant base.

Das's friend Jack Surendranath joined us on our park bench. The two have known each other since the early sixties, when Surendranath, recently arrived from India, bowled for the U.S. national cricket team.

"This is a global age, and cricket has gone global," Das said. Indeed, the populations of all the cricket-obsessed countries add up to more than 1.5 billion people, roughly six times the population of the United States. "In India you breathe cricket," Surendranath said. "There are one billion Indians. Is there anyone in India who hasn't seen cricket? I sincerely believe such a person does not exist. But cricket still has an image problem in America. What did Robin Williams call it? 'Baseball played on Valium.'" I said I had once

mentioned to an American friend that Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett were both ardent cricket fans. "Of course," the friend responded. "All that organized futility."

Das nodded. "But the One Day Revolution has given us the chance to change all that." He recapped the history of that revolution, which began in the late 1970s, when a maverick Australian entrepreneur invented a condensed one-day cricket game to rival the three- and five-day games that gave cricket its reputation in America for geological-scale tedium. Although the long version is still widely played, "one-day cricket," in which each team faces a single inning of 300 balls (cricket's equivalent to pitches), has sparked the sport's international resurgence. The shorter, less arcane, more dramatic game can draw 90,000 spectators to stadiums from Calcutta to Melbourne. Excitement surrounding the 1999 Cricket World Cup, in which one-day cricket was played, accounted for some 35 percent of all TVs sold in India last year. As cricket has gone populist, so the sport's coffers have begun to fill.

Purist defenders of the game dismiss quick cricket as the Disneyfication of their hallowed pastime. Their metaphor may actually be prophetic. Representatives from the Disney Corporation attended the World Cup last year and were evidently impressed: they have had discussion with the USACA about the possibility of constructing a stadium in Orlando and perhaps even hosting the World Cup there.

Max Shaikat, a New Yorker born in Pakistan, believes that cricket will prove lucrative enough to enter the American mainstream and that enthusiasts here will soon be able to watch the game on open TV channels. Shaikat presides over the World Cricket League, an organization concerned less with American cricket players than with the needs of cricket fans. He estimates that one million to 1.5 million people in America follow cricket on a regular basis. But they're still mostly South Asian and Caribbean immigrants residing in New York, New Jersey, Florida, California, and the Pacific Northwest.

"The challenge is to get cricket into the American mental software," Shaikat told me. "At the moment, we're still under different operating systems." Last year Shaikat's organization pulled off a triumph, winning support from New York City for a new cricket stadium. The stadium is to be erected in Brooklyn with \$30 million from private investors. As

Ken Podziba, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's sports commissioner, puts it, "We don't want people to think of just basketball, baseball, and hockey—they should think of cricket, too. We want a cricket field that will attract the world's best players for a New York audience."

WANDERING my favorite cricket haunt—Van Cortland Park, in the Bronx—one sultry afternoon last summer, I was spoiled for choice: five games were in progress. I decided to watch Big Apple Cricket Club take on East Canje Cricket Club. Big Apple was a here-comes-everybody sort of team, with players from at least five different countries. East Canje, I learned, is a tiny coastal village in the Caribbean nation of Guyana. All the players on the East Canje team were Guyanese expatriates; they knew one another from high school. The captain explained to me, "When anyone arrives in New York from East Canje, the next week he gets recruited."

Before me, competing fiercely, were two very different visions of American cricket: the one expansive, a global sport's embrace of cosmopolitan possibility; the other an act of immigrant nostalgia, an attempt to re-create within the chaos of America the ancestral village, through cricket and ethnic self-enclosure.

Even if American cricket chooses the cosmopolitan road, it has a long way to travel before it can recover the popularity it possessed a century ago. Despite the game's resurgence in America, India still boasts more blind cricketers—three million of them—than there are sighted cricketers in the United States. (In blind cricket a rattle is placed inside the ball, enabling play by ear.)

Cricket's advocates take heart from the way soccer has been grafted onto the American sporting scene. Even in the early eighties soccer was viewed as alien. But today there are some 18 million U.S. soccer players, a professional league with growing popularity, and a ubiquitous presence in the schools. Can cricket hope to emulate that success? Or, for that matter, even hope for the kind of modest fan base that "American" football has built in Europe? Perhaps. But even in Seattle not all the auguries are good. Despite Microsoft's support for the cricketing devotions of its software engineers, my Microsoft Word spell checker still underlines "cricketer" in red as a nonexistent word. ☼

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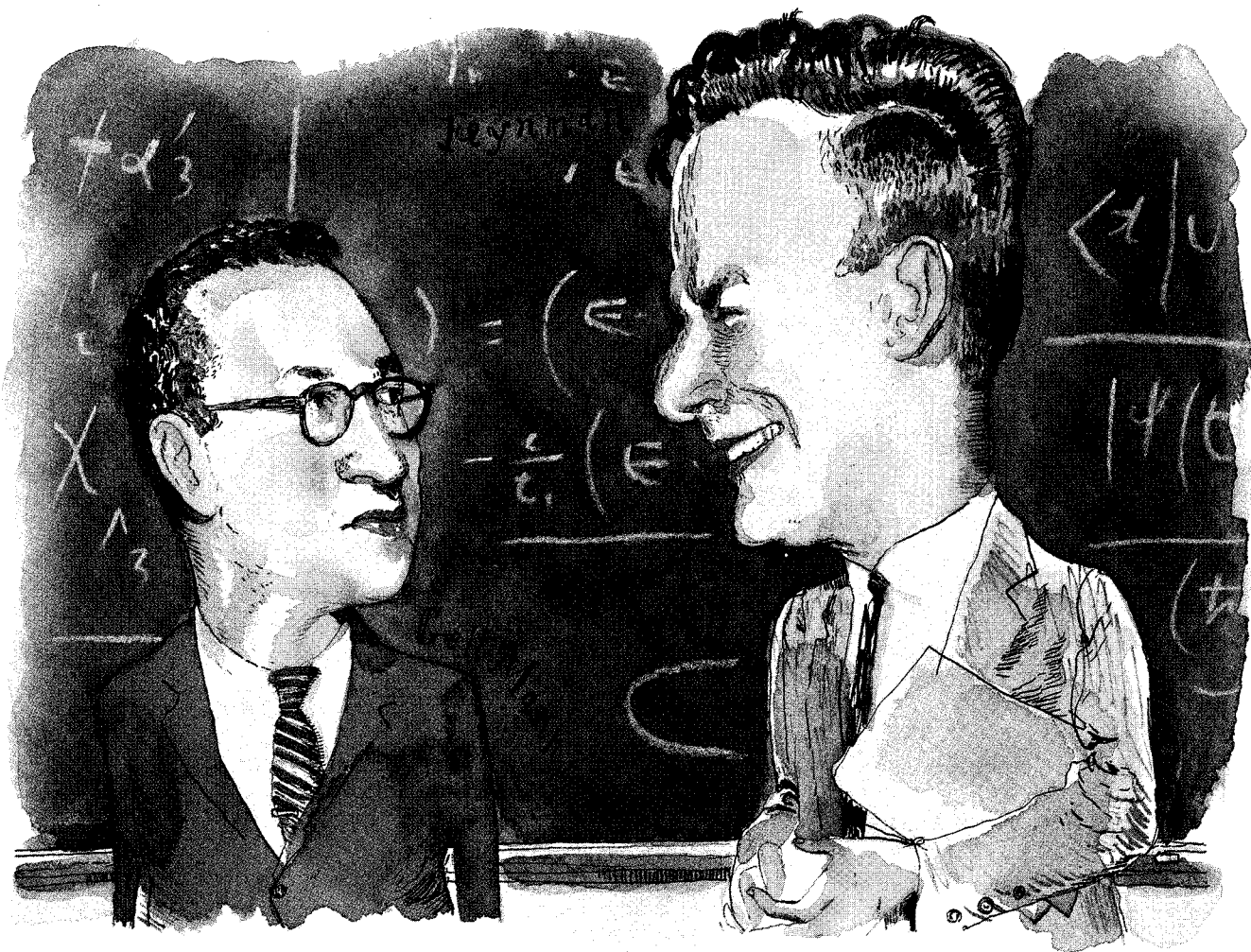
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The Jaguar and the Fox

Hard as he tried, Murray Gell-Mann could never make himself into a legend like his rakish colleague and collaborator Richard Feynman—even if he was probably the greater physicist

A LONG the far wall of the spacious, newly renovated bookstore at the California Institute of Technology, in Pasadena, stands a shrine to Richard Feynman, the university's celebrity scientist. Reaching from floor to ceiling, shelf upon shelf is loaded with multiple copies of more than fifty

by **George Johnson**

Feynman hits—books, CDs, cassettes, and videotapes capturing the outpouring of words written about or uttered by the man many consider to be the greatest physicist of the second half of the twentieth century.

Feynman fans can choose among three biographies, two collections of dictated

autobiographical reminiscences, dozens of lectures, a collection of the scientist's drawings (he also liked to scrawl on placemats at a topless bar), and *Safe-cracker Suite*, a recording of Feynman slapping the skins of bongo drums and regaling listeners with his capers as a young physicist on the Manhattan Project. A precursor to today's computer hackers, Feynman picked the locks on the vaults containing atomic secrets, and then left taunting notes to show how easily security had been thwarted.

Since his death, from cancer, in 1988, the Feynman industry shows no sign of diminishing. Recent books and recordings, including *Six Easy Pieces*, *Six Not-So-Easy Pieces*, and *Feynman's Lost Lecture*, all sold well, and now a new collection, *The Pleasure of Finding Things Out*, has made science best-seller lists. The Mark Taper Forum, in Los Angeles, is planning a production next year called *Tuva or Bust!*, with Alan Alda as Feynman.

Many physicists are puzzled and a little

annoyed to see their old colleague, brilliant as he was, elevated to the level of Einstein. But no one finds the hype more annoying than Murray Gell-Mann. Those who paid attention in physics-for-poets classes may remember Gell-Mann as the man who, working down the hall from Feynman, discovered quarks—the tiny subparticles from which just about everything is made. (He famously took the spelling from a line in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: "Three quarks for Muster Mark!") It was Gell-Mann who came up with the Eightfold Way—an elegant organizing scheme that made sense of the "subatomic zoo," herding some 100 unruly particles into their proper cages. For years a favorite argument among physicists was over "Who is smarter, Murray or Dick?"

But Gell-Mann—who, in semi-retirement, continues to lecture and write—has, to his bewilderment and consternation, never become as famous as his old sparring partner. At the Caltech bookstore one is lucky to find a single copy of his book, *The Quark and the Jaguar*, which did not sell nearly as well as "*Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!*," a collection of humorous anecdotes that Gell-Mann snidely calls "Dick's joke book." When *Physics World* recently asked scientists to name the greatest physicists who ever lived, Feynman came in seventh, just behind Galileo. Gell-Mann didn't make the top ten—or even get a single vote. When he showed up at President Clinton's millennium New Year's Eve ball squiring the actress Talia Shire (famous for playing Rocky Balboa's wife), the cameras barely blinked.

The intimidatingly smart top players in particle physics compete on a level playing field. The field is also rather constricted, with only a few big ideas being batted around at any one time. Most prizewinning discoveries are made by two or more thinkers simultaneously. What makes one a superstar and relegates another to obscurity often depends less on the work itself than on political acumen.

Gell-Mann, as competitive and as savvy as they come, has easily grabbed top honors, including the Nobel Prize for Physics. But there are other factors that count in the manufacture of fame. Gell-Mann knew how to package ideas, and he had a knack for giving whimsical, and unforgettable, names to the most abstract concepts in science. Feynman had a more vital gift: he knew how to package himself.

WHENEVER a new particle is discovered now, science fans expect it to have a funny name. Up quarks, down quarks, strange quarks, charmed quarks, top quarks, bottom quarks—in addition to these six "flavors," quarks come in three "colors": red, green, and blue. There is no end to the inventiveness that has become part of the subculture of particle physics. Bottom quarks and anti-bottom quarks (stuck together by—what else?—gluons) can be combined to form an exotic compound called bottomonium. It is easy to forget sometimes that all this jabberwocky refers to real things.

No one deserves more credit, or blame, for all this verbal whimsy than Murray Gell-Mann. A prodigy who graduated from high school at age fourteen (his classmates thought of him as a walking encyclopedia), he had earned a Ph.D. in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology by the time he was twenty-one. He was brought by Robert Oppenheimer to the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton. From there, in 1952, he went to work with Enrico Fermi at the University of Chicago. It was in the sweltering heat of a Hyde Park summer that Gell-Mann put together the pieces of his first great hit: a theory of strange cosmic rays that seemed to defy the laws of physics.

By all rights these beams of particles, raining down from space, should have decayed as soon as they were snared by the physicists' detectors. But they lingered maddeningly longer—a full hundred-millionth of a second. When Gell-Mann figured out the physical quality that endowed these interlopers with their unexpected longevity, he decided to call it "strangeness." These were, after all, strange particles. A rival theorist, Abraham Pais, urged his colleagues not to adopt this undignified name, but "strangeness" stuck. And a good thing for Gell-Mann that it did: a Japanese physicist, Kazuhiko Nishijima, made the same discovery at about the same time; he called it the "eta-charge." One is not likely to remember Nishijima from the physics-for-poets class.

Other particles that the new theory said should exist (one, with a strangeness of 2, was, Gell-Mann said, "doubly strange") were soon found by experimenters. Gell-Mann was suddenly a star. Refusing an offer from the University of Chicago to double his salary, he accepted his first

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tenured position, at Caltech. It was not the southern-California lifestyle that lured him (he found the place only slightly less depressing than Chicago) but the presence of the physicist he most wanted to work with: Richard Feynman.

In a field that Gell-Mann thought suffered from intellectual phoniness, Feynman, with his madcap energy, seemed to have real genius. He had made his name in 1948, when he and two other scientists, Julian Schwinger and Sin-itiro Tomonaga, figured out how to fix a flaw in the theory of quantum electrodynamics, which explains light, magnetism, and electricity. Like a buggy piece of software, QED, as it is called, kept coughing up answers that were ridiculous (saying, for example, that a particle's mass or charge was infinite). Each of the three theorists solved the problem in a different way, but it was Feynman's vivid approach, calculating with ingenious little pictures soon to be called Feynman diagrams, that made the strongest impression. Feynman dismissed his own accomplishment (which would earn him and the others a Nobel Prize) as so much mathematical hocus-pocus. But Gell-Mann thought that Feynman, more than most others, had a way of seeing beyond the dazzling surface of the equations to what nature was really doing.

After Gell-Mann and his wife arrived in Pasadena, in the spring of 1955, Dick and Murray, as everyone soon called them, became inseparable. Strolling Caltech's immaculately landscaped campus or dueling at the chalkboard over some calculations, the two scientists discussed physics for hours—"twisting the tail of the cosmos," as Gell-Mann later put it. But when it came to almost anything but physics, their personalities clashed.

Gell-Mann, who had been raised in a poor family of Jewish immigrants in Manhattan, was determined to become a debonair man about town. He dressed impeccably, lecturing in well-tailored sport coats and ties on even the hottest summer days. He knew just which wines and dishes to order at a restaurant, and paid with his Carte Blanche. Still the over-eager schoolboy, he pronounced foreign words perfectly and corrected new acquaintances on the pronunciation of their own names.

And then there was Feynman, tieless, in shirtsleeves, grabbing lunch at a greasy spoon. He had grown up in Far Rock-

away, on the outskirts of Queens. Like Gell-Mann, he had never gotten over a need to prove he was the smartest kid on the block. Feynman affected the role of an outsider, a heckler on the sidelines who was ready to deflate anyone who put on airs. Gell-Mann would make a knowing reference to some foreign locale—pronouncing "Montreal" so that it caught in his throat with an authentic Quebecois growl, or "Beijing" so that it rang like a temple bell—and Feynman would pretend not to understand him. "Where?" he'd bark back, sounding more like a Brooklyn cabdriver than someone with a Ph.D. from Princeton. The image was as carefully crafted as Gell-Mann's, but few caught on.

THE real trouble started as early as 1957, when Gell-Mann returned from a wilderness trek in northern California to find Feynman strutting around the department proclaiming an epiphany: in a moment of intense clarity he had seen the very secret of what is known as the weak nuclear force, the engine of radioactive decay. Gell-Mann was dumbfounded. He had been mulling over the problem for weeks, and had come to a similar conclusion. But, typically, he hadn't written the idea up.

Ever since he was in college, Gell-Mann had suffered from a debilitating case of writer's block. He had failed to complete his senior thesis at Yale and had struggled over his Ph.D. dissertation on nuclear theory, preferring to hole up in the library reading the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Now fearful of being scooped, he rushed to beat Feynman into print. Finally the department chairman intervened, persuading his two stars that it would look silly to have competing papers come from the same campus. They agreed to collaborate.

When the theory made its debut, in January of 1958, it lacked the Gell-Mann touch: bereft of a clever name, it was dully called the V-minus-A model. But the power of the idea showed through. Always looking for the scientist who would become heir apparent to "the mantle of Einstein," the news media seized on the two geniuses from Caltech. *Newsweek* declared that the "dapper, cocky" Gell-Mann was many physicists' choice for "brightest light in his esoteric field." With a "Madison Avenue fastidiousness about his clothes" and his "boyish face and

quick tongue," the magazine observed, Gell-Mann exhibited "a kind of sharp intellectual fussiness that has more than once wounded his colleagues." *Time* weighed in with a portrait of Feynman as a bongo-playing beatnik of uncanny mathematical powers who liked to pick locks in his spare time. Explaining a recent decision to become a teetotaler, Feynman said, "I got potted in a Buffalo bar one night and wound up with a lulu of a black eye."

Unaware of how forced the partnership had been, some physicists thought they saw the beginning of a powerful intellectual alliance, with the world's two smartest physicists taking on science's remaining mysteries. Gell-Mann seemed to have the same hope. Though Feynman was essentially a loner, Gell-Mann loved the camaraderie of collaboration. And he was terrified of heading solo into the void with an idea that might turn out to be wrong. He and Feynman had been trying to understand a problem involving neutrinos, the evanescent particles that fly through planets almost as easily as through empty space. The puzzle could be explained, they surmised, if there were actually two kinds of neutrinos (they called them red and blue). Gell-Mann wanted to write up the idea, but when Feynman resisted, he didn't have the nerve to go it alone. The theory, with others' names on it, later turned out to be correct, and Gell-Mann added Feynman's obstinacy to his lengthening list of grievances.

GELL-MANN spent 1959 working in Paris, polishing his French and indulging a growing taste for haute cuisine. After long, wine-soaked lunches with his French colleagues he would return, a little bleary, to his office at the Collège de France and ponder his next big problem: How were the dozens of different particles that kept popping up in accelerator experiments related? Appearing in many shapes and sizes, they appeared to have been created almost at random—an affront to the search for order.

In December of 1960, after a chance conversation with a Caltech mathematician, Gell-Mann saw how to make the particles fit together beautifully in groups of eight. The Israeli physicist Yuval Ne'eman came up with the same idea at the same time, calling it by its mathematical name, SU(3). Gell-Mann, as usual, picked the name that endured: because he

had been reading about Buddhism, he decided to call his classification scheme the Eightfold Way, a mocking reference to the Buddha's eight-step plan for righteous living. Ne'eman later said that one of the crucial things he learned from Gell-Mann was the importance of packaging a theory.

Gell-Mann's accomplishment—among the most spectacular to emerge in the second half of the century—is often compared to Dmitri Mendeleev's Periodic Table of the Elements, in which the hundred or so different atoms line up to form columns of substances with common properties: the noble gases, the rare earth metals, and so forth. The source of the order wasn't understood until scientists discovered that atoms, whose name means "indivisible," actually had minute parts. Elements that behaved in a similar manner had the same number of electrons in their outermost shells, the chemical faces they showed to the world.

Gell-Mann's crowning achievement was to see that the order of the Eightfold Way could be explained if subatomic particles also had structure. Instead of being a featureless glob of positive charge, as had been widely assumed, a proton was made of three tiny particles called quarks. Neutrally charged neutrons were made of a different combination. (Again Gell-Mann wasn't the only one to come to this realization. A young physicist named George Zweig devised a practically identical theory almost simultaneously, calling the units "aces.")

Feynman didn't find the idea particularly appealing. He all but ignored quarks until the late 1960s, when experimenters, firing electron bullets at protons, struck what appeared to be hard little objects inside. His interest finally piqued, Feynman immediately went to work analyzing the experiment, infuriating Gell-Mann by refusing to call the subparticles quarks. He insisted on his own name, "partons." Gell-Mann couldn't believe Feynman's temerity. A mongrel of Latin and Greek, "parton" was to his ear extremely ugly. Gell-Mann started calling them "put-ons," and grumbled that Feynman was trying to hijack his theory.

BY the mid-1980s what had begun as a friendly rivalry was a bitter feud. Gell-Mann had become notorious for his bad temper. Among his cronies, the nasty names he coined for rivals were

as familiar as the catchy terminology he applied to particles. Leon Lederman was "the plumber," because he was an experimenter rather than a theorist. The distinguished theorists C. N. Yang and T. D. Lee were "those two Chinamen from New York."

Gell-Mann respected Feynman too much to saddle him with an insulting name. But Feynman was driving him crazy. Though hardly a prude, Gell-Mann would bristle as Feynman ebulliently described his latest escapades at the Esalen Institute, the New Age spa at Big Sur. Feynman would mock the fuzzy-headed philosophy of the place as he soaked in a hot tub and flirted with naked sunbathers.

The breaking point came in 1985, when Feynman and Ralph Leighton, the son of a Caltech physicist, compiled some of Feynman's tales into "*Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!*": *Adventures of a Curious Character*, which became a surprise best seller. In story after story Feynman came off as the holy fool seeing through everyone else's pretenses. Flipping through the pages, Gell-Mann found Feynman's account of the theory of the weak nuclear force, the one they had reluctantly collaborated on. "I was very excited," Feynman said. "It was the first time, and the only time, in my career that I knew a law of nature that nobody else knew." Gell-Mann, enraged, said he would sue. In a later edition Feynman conceded that Gell-Mann and two other physicists had also thought of the idea. But the disclaimer didn't heal the wound.

For all his accomplishments, Gell-Mann couldn't be happy until he had written a best seller like Feynman's. Adding to his melancholy, "*Surely, You're Joking*" was followed in 1988 by Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, which sold more than nine million copies. To Gell-Mann's colleagues, a book of light-hearted anecdotes told by their intense and pedantic friend seemed a dubious prospect. It would have to be called, one of them said, "*Dammit, Murray, You're Right Again!*" Others remarked that Gell-Mann, unlike Hawking, didn't have the advantage of being confined to a wheelchair.

"I'm writing a book for peasants," Gell-Mann would say dismissively. As it turned out, he wasn't up to the task. *The Quark and the Jaguar* became legendary in publishing circles for the size

of the advances it attracted—reported to be more than a million dollars worldwide—and for the toll in human suffering it took on friends, colleagues, ghostwriters, editors, and, finally, readers. It was the *Heaven's Gate* of science books.

Submitted late and incomplete, the manuscript, composed one agonizing sentence at a time, was rejected by Bantam Books. Shortly afterward Gell-Mann had a mild heart attack. When the book was finally resold, for substantially less money, it did well, but on a far smaller scale than Feynman's. Gell-Mann just couldn't match Feynman as a storyteller. And although Feynman didn't actually write his own books, many of his lectures, transcribed for the popular-science market, were gems of clarity and color. Feynman thought in pictures, Gell-Mann in abstractions. When Gell-Mann tried to convey his ideas to the public, the explanations often fell flat. Making up funny names for particles, it turned out, wasn't enough.

IN the end, Gell-Mann may turn out to be the more important physicist. The Eightfold Way and quarks now lie at the foundation of the Standard Model—the theory that explains how matter is made. It is hard to imagine a more far-reaching contribution to understanding the physical world. Trying to pin down Feynman's significance is much harder. He himself considered his Nobel Prize-winning work more of a virtuoso technical performance than a meaningful insight into nature, and it was completed when he was thirty. After that he made scattered contributions—a theory of a phenomenon called superfluidity, for example. His greatest legacy may be Feynman diagrams, the little pictures that vividly describe particle interactions. (Gell-Mann would deny him even that distinction, obstinately calling them "Stückelberg diagrams," after an obscure Swiss physicist who devised a similar notion.)

Neither Feynman nor Gell-Mann got what he most wanted. Feynman never stopped lamenting that he had missed the thrill of being the first to understand a new truth. Gell-Mann has never become a household name. And the friction between them prevented the kind of alliance that might have led to even greater discoveries—great enough, perhaps, to satisfy both these impossible men. ♣

The Last Great Critic

Lionel Trilling believed that politics needed the imaginative qualities of literature and that liberalism needed literature's sense of "variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty"

by Nathan Glick

LIONEL TRILLING AND THE CRITICS

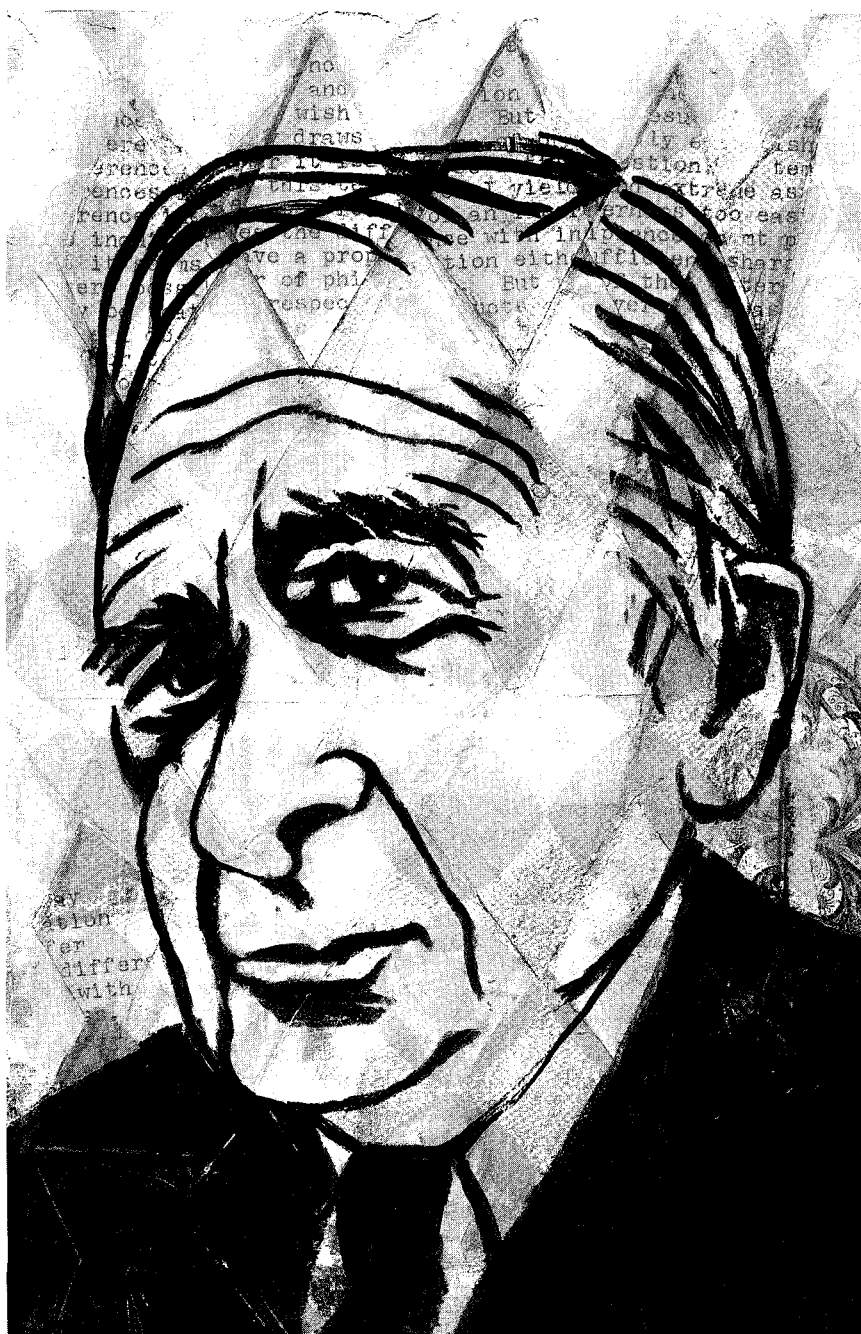
Opposing Selves

edited by John Rodden.

University of Nebraska Press, 490 pages,
\$70.00/\$29.95.

MOST Americans who respond seriously to books and ideas seem to agree that Lionel Trilling (1905–1975) became in the postwar years and remains today our most influential, most admired, and at the same time most controversial and perplexing literary critic. He could not match Edmund Wilson's mastery of a vast range of European and American writing. He did not report the contemporary scene with anything like the passion and thoroughness of Irving Howe and Alfred Kazin. He developed no grand theories about literature comparable to those of the deconstructionists who now dominate the English departments of major universities—and who place the critic's interpretation above the mere text of the unsuspecting author. Nor did he cultivate disciples; he was, as a colleague at Columbia University wrote, "a sorcerer who took no apprentices."

What made Lionel Trilling unique among literary critics was the way he applied the idea of the "moral imagination" to the writers he especially admired. In the course of discussing works by Henry James, E. M. Forster, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Orwell, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, among others, Trilling raised questions about how we live our lives, about the nature of good and evil, about the roles played by culture and biology, about our ambivalence in making



moral choices. Readers came to look for something in Trilling that went beyond the insights of traditional literary criticism. They expected something closer to philosophical wisdom.

On the evidence of *Lionel Trilling and the Critics*, that is what the most discriminating readers of his work often found, even when they disputed his reasoning or his conclusions. The seventy essays and reviews gathered here represent a good cross-section of the finest critical minds in Anglo-American letters, reflecting the powerful response Trilling's work elicited in England as well as in the United States. John Rodden, the editor, is something of a pioneer in his field: we are accustomed to collections of critical essays about prominent novelists, but this volume is, to my knowledge, the first collection devoted to a literary critic—in itself a tribute to Trilling's stature and reputation. It has also been put together with scrupulous attention to the needs of the non-academic reader. Every contributor is introduced with a pithy sketch; endnotes identify names and books and even lines of argument that may be unfamiliar to current readers. Because it was edited with uncommon good sense, *Lionel Trilling and the Critics* achieves Rodden's "dual aim: to illuminate the unfolding of Trilling's literary reputation and to recapture the lively debates in American cultural politics to which his writings contributed (and continue to stimulate in our own day)."

The liveliest controversy surrounding Lionel Trilling since his death centers on whether or how far he shifted his political thinking from an early liberalism to a conservatism (or neo-conservatism) that some of his friends embraced but to which he never gave any overt support. Advocates on both sides can find passages in Trilling's writing that seem to support their views. But a careful reading of those passages (and others) leads to the core of Trilling's outlook. His first notable statement about liberalism, literature, and politics appears in the preface to his most influential collection of essays, *The Liberal Imagination* (1950).

To the carrying out of the job of criticizing the liberal imagination, literature has a unique relevance, not merely because so much of modern literature has explicitly directed itself upon politics, but more importantly

because literature is the human activity that takes the fullest and most precise account of variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty.

Earlier, in his introduction to *The Partisan Reader* (1946), Trilling issued this elegantly ominous caution: "Unless we insist that politics is imagination and mind, we will learn that imagination and mind are politics, and of a kind we will not like."

The commentary included in Rodden's collection makes it clear that Trilling was criticizing liberalism from a special perspective. His target was not the liberals and radicals in his circle around the *Partisan Review* but the fellow-traveling Stalinists who judged literature primarily by its "progressive" stance and were indifferent to the more modulated, more imaginative sense of human experience found in great literature. A number of conservatives who were once close to Trilling, however, have argued that his political and also his cultural sentiments moved steadily in their direction.

Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary* during its turn to the right, claims that Trilling was really sympathetic to the magazine's campaign against the New Left in the late 1960s, but refused to join in public combat for fear of losing his "position of venerability." He bluntly accuses Trilling of a "failure of nerve" that was part of "an epidemic of cowardice" among liberal intellectuals. Podhoretz's speculations, besides being a disloyal deprecation of a former friend and mentor, have the scent of ideological self-serving. They come with particular ill grace from a writer who treats his own seven-year flirtation with the New Left as not only easily forgivable but also proof of his editorial flair for riding the tide of political fashion.

A more nuanced claim is made by Gertrude Himmelfarb, the distinguished historian of Victorian England and the wife of Irving Kristol, who is often called the godfather of neo-conservatism. Unlike Podhoretz, Himmelfarb pays unqualified and grateful tribute to Trilling's character and to his influence on her thinking.

He was able to resist the insidious ideological and political fashions of his time without the coarsening of mind that often comes with doing battle, and also without the timidity and equivocation that retreats from battle in an excess of fastidiousness.

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But Himmelfarb does not recognize that the same impulse to resist ideological absolutes that made Trilling critical of doctrinaire Stalinoid liberalism would have made him immune to a doctrinaire market-based, often philistine, conservatism. She quotes a passage in an early (1947) essay which she finds, writing in 1992, "of the greatest pertinence today." This passage warns against the danger facing "us" as social reformers which leads us, "when once we have made our fellow men the objects of our enlightened interest, to go on to make them the objects of our pity, then of our wisdom, ultimately of our coercion."

Read in context, this warning was clearly an attack not on liberalism itself but on those self-proclaimed "liberals" who defended the coercive tyranny of Stalin's Russia. In a 1974 foreword to *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling pointed out that his early essays were written "with reference to a particular political-cultural situation," which he identified as "the commitment that a large segment of the intelligentsia of the West gave to the degraded version of Marxism known as Stalinism." He was simply reminding "people who prided themselves on being liberals that liberalism was . . . a political position which affirmed the value of individual existence in all its variousness, complexity, and difficulty." That last phrase, often repeated, defined for Trilling the virtues he looked for not only in politics but also in the novels and poems he admired.

BUT before we come to his specifically literary criticism, we have to contend with an accusation made against Trilling from the left by several of the younger contributors to this volume. They agree with the view from the right that Trilling had moved toward a more conservative position on cultural matters and a weaker concern for social reform as a traditional element of liberal politics. For Mark Shechner, Trilling's critique of the liberal imagination, although couched in "powerful emotions . . . limpid phrases and fine ideas," served mainly "to justify to himself his waning interest in the ruling passion of his generation: social justice." Born in 1941, Shechner fails to recognize how strongly and widely, in the wake of the West's wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, the cultural influence of fellow-traveling Stalinism had perme-

ated publishing, theater, and cinema, or how necessary a corrective to its crudities Trilling provided.

Cornel West, a professor of African-American studies at Harvard University and a political activist, shows a more astute understanding of Trilling's aim: to spread "the cult of complexity" and promote "a liberal politics of moderation." In his sprawling, unbuttoned, and highly infectious essay, West ranges broadly over Trilling's work, locating brilliant nuggets of cultural insight but concluding that Trilling's indifference to the imperatives of political power led him to an intellectual "dead-end." West approvingly quotes another contributor, Joseph Frank, who criticizes Trilling for trying "to endow social passivity and quietism . . . with the halo of aesthetic transcendence." Finally, West cites Trilling against his own temperamental aversion to polemics and to the kind of heated atmosphere that active politics encouraged.

Our fate, for better or worse, is political. It is not in itself a happy fate, even when it has an heroic sound. But there is no escape from it and the only possibility of enduring it is to force into our definition of politics every human activity and every subtlety of every human activity.

Indeed, early in *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling declared his interest in what he called "the dark and bloody crossroads where literature and politics meet," except that for him "bloody" meant embattled rather than violent; and literature, because of its intrinsic humanism, had more wisdom to offer than the activist and morally troubling world of politics. It is this interplay of literature, politics, and ideas that gives Trilling's work a scope and a richness not found in most literary criticism. Still, it is as a literary critic that he gained his reputation and must be judged. John Rodden recognizes this priority by structuring his collection around Trilling's books chronologically, with a final section devoted to more general "Appreciations, Influences, Controversies, Reconsiderations."

TRILLING'S first book played a crucial role in drawing international attention to his intellectual gifts and marking him as, in Rodden's phrase, "a rising star." The extreme, almost unanimous praise for his 1939 biography of Matthew Arnold, the dominant figure in English

criticism in the late nineteenth century, surprised everyone, including Trilling himself. One of England's leading men of letters, the novelist, critic, and editor John Middleton Murry, opened his review on a mock note of hurt national pride.

Mr. Trilling, who is an American professor, has written the best—the most comprehensive and critical—book on Matthew Arnold that exists. It is a little saddening to us that this particular glory should fall to the United States.

Another British reviewer called the book "the most brilliant piece of biographical criticism issued in English during the last ten years."

But it was the review by Edmund Wilson that pleased Trilling most. Wilson was at the time indisputably America's leading critic, regarded by Trilling as a model for joining literary, political, and social commentary with an enviable lucidity of style. At one point Trilling had become despondent about writing on a subject so remote from the Great Depression and the impending war. Wilson, then only a casual acquaintance, urged him to finish the book, insisting that the subject was a worthy one. On its publication Wilson, notoriously not given to easy praise, called it "one of the first critical studies of any solidity or scope by an American of his generation."

The biography succeeded in large part because Arnold offered Trilling a particularly sympathetic subject: an author who combined the roles of creative artist (poet rather than novelist), literary critic, and social-political thinker. Both men knew the internal tension felt by those who were at the same time cultural conservatives and political liberals. And Arnold's brooding meditation on the displacement of religious faith by science, in his famous poem "Dover Beach" ("we are here as on a darkling plain . . . Where ignorant armies clash by night"), anticipated a similar disposition toward melancholy and fatalism which surfaced in Trilling's later work.

The Arnold biography won for Trilling the tenure at Columbia University that the English-department faculty had earlier withheld because some believed that a Jew could not properly appreciate English literature. After the university's president, an ardent Anglophile, declared himself deeply impressed by the book, the faculty reversed itself; ultimately

Trilling became one of only two department faculty members to receive the prestigious title "university professor." By the 1950s, as a former student recalls in Rodden's collection, "Trilling was already something of a legendary figure, the intellectual conscience of the undergraduate English Department . . . a link to the turbulent world of the New York intellectuals."

His next book, a study of E. M. Forster's novels (1943), provided Trilling with an occasion to test the approach to literature that he later developed more fully in *The Liberal Imagination*. Forster was at the time moderately admired in England but little known in the United States. Trilling's enthusiastic portrait stimulated a reissue of Forster's novels and a new assessment of his importance. The book's famous opening sentence has a deceptive simplicity that startles the reader into sudden attention.

E. M. Forster is for me the only living novelist who can be read again and again and who, after each reading, gives me what few writers can give us after our first days of novel-reading, the sensation of having learned something.

In recent years moviegoers could experience a similar sensation without actually reading the novels. Four of the five, written from 1905 to 1924, have been made into fairly faithful films: *A Room With a View*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End*, and *A Passage to India*. (*The Longest Journey* has not yet reached the screen.) What Trilling found compelling in Forster's novels was their distinctive approach to moral issues. He wrote,

All novelists deal with morality, but not all novelists . . . are concerned with moral realism, which is not the awareness of morality itself but of the contradictions, paradoxes and dangers of living the moral life.

Trilling admired Forster because he was a liberal who resisted liberal shibboleths. For example, his novels often touch on the idea of class, but class is not defined primarily in terms of income. In *Howards End* especially, Trilling wrote, Forster "shows the conflicting truths of the idea—that on the one hand class is character, soul and destiny, and that on the other hand class is not finally determining." But here class tensions operate *within* the middle class on three levels:

at the extremes are the wealthy businessman disdainful of art and weakness and the lowly clerk with a taste for poetry, and between them are the two intellectual sisters. The scene at the novel's end of the happy child of the clerk and the younger sister playing in a hayfield symbolized for Forster the secret of the good life: "Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height." This sudden mood of transcendence, bursting out of Forster's otherwise unpretentious conversational style, shows the novelist, as Trilling approvingly put it, "content with human possibility and content with its limitations."

WE now know, from parts of his diaries, posthumously published, that Trilling hoped to be thought of primarily as a novelist rather than a literary critic. An editor at *The New Yorker* once showed him a letter Hemingway had sent in 1933, to which Trilling's response was passionately confessional.

A crazy letter written when he was drunk—self-revealing, arrogant, scared, trivial, absurd: yet felt how right such a man is compared to the "good minds" of my university life—how he will produce and mean something to the world. . . . And how far-far I am . . . from being a writer.

When Trilling's first and only novel, *The Middle of the Journey* (1947), appeared, it received mixed notices and a small readership. A year later, however, after Whittaker Chambers accused Alger Hiss of being a Soviet spy, the novel acquired an extra-literary fame and wider popularity. An important character in the novel, Gifford Maxim, turned out to be based on Chambers, whom Trilling had known as a fellow student at Columbia in the 1920s.

The novel is essentially an intellectual and moral dialogue among three political positions, represented by the major characters. Arthur and Nancy Croom are affluent young fellow-travelers who take no responsibility for the consequences of their unwavering loyalty to the Soviet Union or of their romanticized view of a local worker who is also a feckless drunkard. In contrast, Maxim, a former spy, who could be a character out of Dostoevski, has embraced an intense religious hostility to any kind of secular

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society. Rejecting both extremes, John Laskell, who is closest to Trilling's temperate disposition, reflects, in a formulation that several reviewers quoted as Trilling's central point, "An absolute freedom from responsibility—that much of a child none of us can be. An absolute responsibility—that much of a divine or metaphysical essence none of us is."

This unspoken comment, affirming Laskell's allegiance to the moderate center, recalls an anecdote told by Richard Sennett in a fascinating memoir included in *Lionel Trilling and the Critics*. Once, when Trilling was talking about the need to come to terms with the conflicting influences of man-made culture on the one hand and unchangeable biology on the other, the youthful Sennett taunted him: "You have no position, you are always in between." "Between," Trilling replied, "is the only honest place to be." Sennett sees this response as a clue to Trilling's larger statement on the moral life. Trilling warned against the temptation of fervent heroism, with its danger of excess, and counterposed the recognition of life's limits, which implies an acceptance of rational thinking as the only decent means of dealing with political and cultural issues.

Trilling's next three major books were collections of essays, often critical introductions to new editions of famous books. In these—*The Liberal Imagination*, *The Opposing Self* (1955), and *Beyond Culture* (1965)—we find the unique character of his treatment of particular novels. Whether he was dealing with Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or Dickens's *Little Dorrit* or Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* or Henry James's *The Bostonians* or Jane Austen's *Emma*, Trilling always moved from plot and character and style to larger ideas about morality or psychology. Even more appealing than this compulsion to explore the wider implications of a work is the sheer passion with which he responded to it. Morris Dickstein's foreword—the most thorough, personal, and balanced essay in *Trilling and the Critics*—describes Trilling's approach to literature vividly.

What meant most to him was to be possessed by a book, to be disoriented and changed by it. . . . Trilling talked about books as if they might rise up and attack him; he was especially fond of quoting Auden's remark that books read us as much as we read them.

Even more colorful is Irving Howe's inventive image.

Trilling would circle a work with his fond, nervous wariness, as if in the presence of some force, some living energy, which could not always be kept under proper control—indeed, as if he were approaching an elemental power.

Several critics choose Trilling's introduction to *The Selected Letters of John Keats* as his most brilliant, most original portrait (included in *The Opposing Self*). The introduction was called "The Poet as Hero," and it responded to the person revealed by the letters in a way that can best be described as intellectual hero worship.

The charm of Keats's letters is inexhaustible. . . . [His] wisdom is the proud, bitter, and joyful acceptance of tragic life which we associate pre-eminently with Shakespeare. . . . [Despite his] mature masculinity . . . he had an awareness, rare in our culture, of the female principle as a power, an energy. . . . He with his intense naturalism that took so passionate an account of the mystery of man's nature, reckoning as boldly with pleasure as with pain.

This is not the tone or savor of most literary criticism. Trilling wrote with similar though not equal ardor about Jane Austen and Henry James and Charles Dickens. Even if we find his language excessive, he nevertheless engages us and compels our attention. It is this heightened emotional and intellectual force, contained behind a serene and genial manner, that explains Trilling's popularity with students and his remarkable influence, through generations of students and readers, in the English departments of universities across the country and, to a lesser degree, in England.

I have no room to discuss Trilling's deep involvement with the writings of Sigmund Freud, whom he admired enormously for his forceful recognition of the dark side of life and for his courage in discovering and telling unpalatable truths. However, the essay included here by the psychotherapist Bruno Bettelheim offers a superb account of the interaction of Trilling, psychoanalysis, and literature. Nor do I have room to explore Trilling's ambivalent feelings about teaching the great modern writers—D. H. Lawrence and Franz Kafka, Yeats and Eliot, Joyce and Proust, Mann and Con-

rad—all of whom he believed offered an adversarial, indeed a subversive, attitude toward the basic tenets of liberal democracy. Trilling asked his students to look into the abyss of terrors and mysteries gaping before them in this literature and found them passively interested, displaying neither wonder nor fear. Was the effect of teaching such works, under the respectable auspices of a university course, simply to legitimize and defang the subversive?

I CANNOT close this review without noting two contributions by the editor. John Rodden's introductory survey of the contents of this collection is richly but casually informative; it is also lively, witty, opinionated, and fair-minded. His other essay, "Trilling's Homage to Orwell" is adapted from Rodden's book *The Politics of Literary Reputation* (1989). Rodden argues here that Trilling's single piece on Orwell, his introduction to a 1952 reissue of Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, was largely responsible for establishing Orwell's reputation in the United States as a "virtuous man" who never faltered in his pursuit of "the politics of truth." When the book was originally published, it was either disregarded or dismissed, because Orwell's firsthand report on the treacherous role played by the Stalinists during the Spanish Civil War was anathema to leftist orthodoxy at the time. Trilling found Orwell to be an exemplary figure because of "his simple ability to look at things in a downright, undeceived way." Trilling went on to draw this remarkably chastening lesson from Orwell's character:

He is not a genius—what a relief! What an encouragement. For he communicates to us the sense that what he has done any one of us could do.

Or could do if we but made up our mind to do it, if we but surrendered a little of the cant that comforts us, if for a few weeks we paid no attention to the little group with which we habitually exchange opinions, if we took our chance of being wrong or inadequate, if we looked at things simply and directly. . . . He liberates us. . . . he frees us from the need for the inside dope. . . . he restores the old sense of the democracy of the mind. . . . He has the effect of making us believe that we can become full members of the society of thinking men. ☞

Fascism's Secretary of State

by Francis X. Rocca

MUSSOLINI'S SHADOW

The Double Life of Count Galeazzo Ciano

by Ray Moseley.
Yale University Press,
312 pages, \$29.95.

"TOO many painters, sculptors and architects have represented Italy in Poland in the past," Galeazzo Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, complained in his diary during a visit to Warsaw in early 1939. "They love in us the poetry of the pen rather than the strength of our arms, in which they still do not completely believe. We must work hard to correct the bad name they have given us for centuries."

A few weeks later Italy invaded Albania, and less than two months after that sealed the pact with Nazi Germany that eventually brought Italy into World War II. The invasion of Greece—like that of Albania, promoted and planned by Ciano—started in October of 1940. Such were the feats with which the Italian Fascists hoped to impress the Poles and the rest of the world. Ciano would have been worse than chagrined had he known as he wrote these words that his most significant and lasting achievement would turn out to be not a military victory or a diplomatic coup but a book.

Ciano's diary of 1937–1943 is one of the most important sources of information we have about the political side of the Axis war effort. It is also a collection of vivid and devastating portraits of the principal Nazis and Fascists—above all, Benito Mussolini, Italy's dictator and Ciano's father-in-law. A lust for power and a lack of principle led Ciano to the heart of the Fascist regime, but his intelligence and intermittent moral sense enabled him to make acute and illuminating observations once he got there. That combination of opportunism and integrity makes Ciano's story, as told by Ray

Moseley in *Mussolini's Shadow*, an absorbing historical and personal narrative.

Ciano was a scion of the Fascist aristocracy, the son of a World War I naval hero who was made a count in 1925 and whom Mussolini later picked to succeed him in the event of his sudden death. The elder Ciano further rewarded himself, it seems, with kickbacks and payoffs during his tenure as Minister of Communications.

The younger Ciano was an unenthusiastic law student and a frustrated playwright, who showed no interest in fascism before Mussolini came to power, and who briefly worked for a left-wing newspaper. After graduating from his university, he joined the diplomatic service and held posts in Latin America and China. The Duce personally recalled him on the recommendation that Ciano would make a good match for his eldest daughter, Edda, whom Ciano met in early 1930 and proposed to seventeen days later. They were married in April of that year.

Theirs was to be an open marriage. The baby-faced Ciano, with "a high-pitched, nasal voice [and] a flat-footed, slightly comic walk," was nonetheless a consummate ladies' man, with a preference for the daughters and wives of the old nobility in Rome. (Like his womanizing father-in-law, he was more abstemious when it came to tobacco and alcohol.) The initially shy bride briefly locked herself in the bathroom on their wedding night, but soon took lovers of her own, favoring "alpine guides and lifeguards" over aristocrats. Ciano and his wife produced three children, and would ultimately show a devotion to each other stronger than other family attachments and even the fear of death.

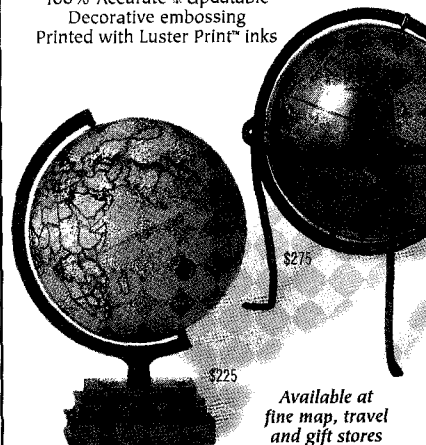
"You have found an insurance policy for life," a friend remarked to Ciano shortly after his betrothal. After three years abroad, the young count became Mussolini's chief propagandist. A photo from that period (featured on this book's dust jacket) shows him seated at his desk, looking thoughtful and a bit diffident, under a martial portrait of the Duce; but as he grew more powerful, Ciano increasingly emulated the stern and strutting mannerisms of his patron. In 1935 he volunteered as a bomber pilot in Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. The following year, when Ciano was thirty-three, his father-in-law made him Europe's youngest Foreign Minister, in which capacity he oversaw Italy's assistance to Franco's Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War,

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and the increasingly close alliance with Nazi Germany.

Ciano personally favored the British and the French, whose languages he spoke fluently, and was wary of abetting German domination of the Continent, a hesitation that Mussolini shared. But the democracies offended the Duce with their sanctions after his imperial adventure in Ethiopia, whereas the Nazis were ideological kin and offered a chance for expansion through war—an essential good, according to the Fascist creed.

Thus Italy staged an invasion of Albania even though the country was, in Moseley's words, "in effect an Italian feudal holding." The Fascist propaganda machine touted the swift operation as a glorious conquest, and Ciano took particular satisfaction in his leading role. The count thereafter referred to Albania as his "grand duchy," and the seaport Santi Quaranta was renamed Port Edda, in honor of his wife.

Knowing that Italy was not ready to fight a real war, Ciano opposed the German invasion of Poland, in September of 1939, which touched off the conflict with Britain and France. Italy might have left the alliance at this point, because the Pact of Steel required consultation between the two countries before either provoked hostilities, but Mussolini and Ciano let themselves be swayed by Hitler's promises of easy victory. After less than a year of "non-belligerence," a restless Duce brought his country into the war in June of 1940. Ciano again volunteered as a bomber pilot, a role he resumed with gusto. "Imagine my orgasm!," he exclaimed to Edda after one raid, in a telephone conversation (one of several quoted by Moseley) recorded by the Italian Secret Service.

RELATIONS with the Nazis were naturally the main subject of the diary Ciano kept as Foreign Minister. Mussolini knew about the diary-keeping and even encouraged it, occasionally directing his son-in-law to write down specific incidents for posterity. The Duce seems to have imagined that the diary would be material for propaganda in a future war against Germany.

Ciano's account of his dealings with Berlin belies the image of Axis solidarity it suited both regimes to project. If his diary has a dominant theme, it is Hitler's treachery and Mussolini's helpless resentment. With little or no notice to Italy, Germany invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway,

Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Romania. Hitler's non-aggression pact with Stalin, and then his violation of that pact with the invasion of Russia, likewise came as last-minute news to Rome. Every time Hitler's actions embroiled Italy more deeply in a war that it was not ready to fight, Mussolini privately seethed; but he never had the courage to object or to opt out, until finally it was too late and Germany had become Italy's master.

"Hitler always faces me with a fait accompli," the Duce complained. He approved the ill-conceived invasion of Greece in an attempt to impress his rival: "This time I will pay him back with the same coin. He will learn from the papers that I have occupied Greece. Thus the balance will be re-established." The resulting debacle eventually required German intervention, only confirming Italy's subservience.

The count's careful record of these indignities would pay off in a kind of post-war revenge on the Germans. The words he attributed to Germany's Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, shortly before the invasion of Poland—"We want war"—would prove an important piece of evidence against the Nazi diplomat at Nuremberg.

Ciano depicted the Nazis as malevolent and untrustworthy, but also as ridiculous. After the German Foreign Minister received a prestigious decoration from the Italian King, the head of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring, "whose star is no longer in the ascendant, had tears in his eyes when he saw the collar of the Annunziata around Ribbentrop's neck," Ciano wrote. "[German Ambassador Hans Georg] von Mackensen told me that Goering had made a scene, complaining that the collar really belonged to him, since he was the true and only promoter of the Alliance. I promised Mackensen that I would try to get Goering a collar." Though Ciano more than once succumbed to Hitler's charisma, the German dictator struck him as a windbag: "It is always Hitler who talks! He can be Führer as much as he likes, but he always repeats himself and bores his guests."

Yet it is Mussolini who comes off worst of all in Ciano's account—as not only vain and callous but also insecure and increasingly irrational over the course of the war. Repeatedly the Duce blamed his failures on the weakness of the Italian people, whom he called "sheep," and whom he

pledged to beat until he could make warriors of them. He ordered false air-raid sirens to sound in Rome, and had anti-aircraft guns fired just to make the atmosphere "more exciting." When it snowed, he welcomed the weather for its toughening effect on the population; he had the same reaction to news of food shortages. (Even more chillingly, he also reasoned that hungry faces would make for a better bargaining position at the eventual peace conference.) In the midst of the Greek disaster he occupied himself with a campaign against certain Catholic holy days. A year later he forbade the newspapers to mention Christmas, which, he said, "only recalls the birth of a Jew who gave the world debilitating and devitalizing theories, and in particular screwed Italy through the disintegrating work of the papacy."

Over time Ciano lost faith in Mussolini, even secretly writing a letter to Winston Churchill in which he asserted that his diary ought to be published "so that the world may know, may hate and may remember, and that those who will have to judge the future should not be ignorant of the fact that the misfortune of Italy was not the fault of her people, but due to the shameful behavior of one man." Ciano underrated his own guilt, and that of his compatriots, but he appreciated the power of his diary to embarrass the Fascist and Nazi regimes. In the end he hoped to use it to bargain for his life.

As early as May of 1941, just before Italy lost Ethiopia, Ciano had surreptitiously been in touch with the Americans to propose the Duce's overthrow and a separate Italian peace. He later backed off, and supported the Axis as long as it seemed that Hitler might win. Ciano's leanings were no secret, though—least of all to the Germans, who shared their intelligence with Mussolini. The Duce relieved his son-in-law of his ministry in February of 1943 and made him envoy to the Vatican.

Ciano remained a member of the Fascist Grand Council, Italy's nominal governing body, and kept in touch with the growing ranks of disaffected members. He was one of those who pressed for a meeting of the council in the summer of 1943, which Mussolini called on the evening of July 24. The Duce had ignored warnings from his wife and advisers, and was remarkably calm during the hours of speeches criticizing his war policy. Several of the members had arrived armed

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with hand grenades, expecting Mussolini to resist an ouster; but after a majority—including his son-in-law—voted to restore the constitutional powers of the King, the parliament, the cabinet, and the council itself, Mussolini mysteriously failed to have them arrested. The historian Denis Mack Smith has suggested that the exhausted dictator may have welcomed this escape from his predicament. Neither he nor Ciano can have realized that this vote would trigger the immediate collapse of the regime and its replacement by a government that would swiftly have them both arrested.

The new Prime Minister, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, who had been the chief of general staff, continued to fight on Germany's side but furtively sued for peace. Badoglio also secretly imprisoned Mussolini in an empty ski hotel on the highest peak of the Gran Sasso mountains. By the time Italy announced an armistice, in September of 1943, the Germans had already begun moving troops into the peninsula. A team of German paratroopers delivered the Duce from his mountain prison—they crash-landed in gliders outside the hotel and then flew him in another plane to Munich—without firing a single shot. Hitler installed Mussolini as head of the puppet government of the "Italian Social Republic"—German-occupied Italy.

By this time the Germans had already "rescued" the Duce's son-in-law from house arrest in Rome. Ciano had good reason to fear the Nazis' wrath, yet he had actually appealed to them for help—his other options for escape would have meant leaving his wife and children behind. Edda later claimed to have believed that the German plane on which the family left Italy was headed for Spain, but Moseley credibly argues that they must have known better. Perhaps Ciano placed his faith in Hitler's fondness for Edda; but she offended the Führer by hectoring him to make peace with Russia and tactlessly offering him a commission if he would change her lire into Spanish pesetas. Hitler sent the count back to the rump of Fascist Italy, where he was arrested upon arrival.

What followed deserves Moseley's description as "a family tragedy of epic proportions." Mussolini knew he would lose the respect of Hitler and the diminishing band of loyal Fascists if he spared Ciano. So the Duce ignored his beloved daughter's pleas for mercy.

Through his wife and a sympathetic SS

secretary (who may also have been his lover), Ciano again appealed to the Germans. The SS chief, Heinrich Himmler, considered letting him escape in return for the diary, with which Himmler hoped to compromise his rival Ribbentrop; but when Hitler learned of the negotiations, he ruled them out.

The story does not end with Ciano's death. An exciting subplot involves Edda's lover Emilio Pucci, the future fashion designer, who helped her to escape from Italy and endured torture at the hands of the Germans rather than reveal her whereabouts. Edda and her children made it to Switzerland, closely pursued by Nazis seeking the diary. There Edda made contact with Allen Dulles, who was then an agent of the Office of Strategic Services, and with a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News*, and the diary was published in June of 1945.

MOSELEY is a gifted storyteller, a veteran newsman who writes with academic rigor and journalistic immediacy, and who can draw excruciating suspense from events whose outcome the reader already knows. The account here of Ciano's final hours—reading Seneca all through the night, briefly taking heart at the rumor of a last-minute reprieve, cursing and then forgiving Mussolini as he walked to his execution—movingly substantiates the author's claim that the count ultimately displayed "an element of heroism."

Ciano's end was all the more dignified by comparison with that of Mussolini, who was caught in April of 1945 as he tried to flee Italy in a convoy of German soldiers, disguised in a Luftwaffe helmet and overcoat. Italian partisans shot the Duce and his mistress, Clara Petacci, and strung up their bodies in a Milan gas station, where an enraged crowd kicked and spat at them. Among this book's well-chosen illustrations is a famous image of the two, hanging by their feet like pigs in a butcher's window, Mussolini's beaten face swollen out of recognition, Petacci's merely frozen in terror.

Another, less familiar photograph included here is as brutal and piercing as Goya's *The Third of May, 1808*: The stout figure of a caped priest, black against the snow, walks away from a row of condemned men. One of the witnesses covers his face with his hands. A member of the firing squad glances toward the camera. And Galeazzo Ciano, strapped to a

chair, with his back to the riflemen, turns in his last moments to look over his shoulder. It is a fitting valedictory image for a man whose greatest legacy would be testimony to events he did not understand until it was too late to stop them. ☼

Scientific Fiction

by Adam Kirsch

PLOWING THE DARK

by Richard Powers.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux,
415 pages, \$25.00.

AT a time when scientific discovery outpaces almost everyone's understanding of it, Richard Powers is perhaps the only novelist with the ability, and the desire, to bridge the two cultures. In his books he acts as docent, leading the reader through elaborate exhibitions of modern technology: genetics in *The Gold Bug Variations* (1991), artificial intelligence in *Galatea 2.2* (1995), and now virtual reality, in *Plowing the Dark*. But although Powers brings progress reports on the sciences (and in doing so, performs an old-fashioned novelistic task—explaining how the world works), they have more than a journalistic interest for him. The allure and danger of technology is his continuing theme, and he fertilizes his language with its special vocabularies and metaphors; the combination puts his fiction with the most ambitious of his generation, and has earned him comparison to writers as different as Thomas Pynchon and Saul Bellow.

Often in Powers's novels the main character stands in for the reader as pupil and researcher, bringing him or herself up to speed on the latest developments. In *Plowing the Dark* that surrogate is Adie Klarpol, a New York artist who has retreated into commercial design after years of disillusionment. As the novel opens, she gets an invitation from an old college friend to join him at TeraSys, a thinly disguised Microsoft, where a small team of programmers is taking the first steps toward virtual

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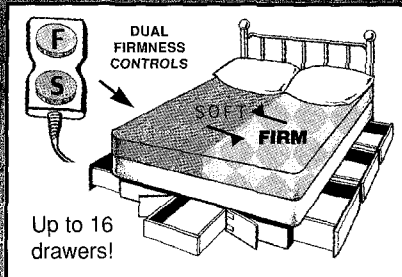
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reality. Adie's job will be to paint the various worlds that they bring to life in their demonstration room, the Cavern.

Powers, whose basic mistrust of technology never overcomes his passionate curiosity about it, shows Adie not repelled but revived by this new application of her art. When the team starts turning the Cavern into a full-scale replica of the Hagia Sophia, Adie sees herself, with very little irony, as the genuine heir to the original church's master craftsmen, working on a project greater than herself, in which all her gifts have a use and a purpose.

Adie and her colleagues—a gallery of techie misfits, from the young programmer who meets a bride by e-mail to the senior mathematician embittered by his demotion from pure to applied research—are inspired to re-create the Hagia Sophia by Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium." This unlikely fusion of poetry and technology—not only Adie but also her college friend and Ronan O'Reilly, an Irish programmer, are Yeats fanatics—is one of many signs that Powers, though he seems to boast of research done and notes taken, is not a documentary realist. The poem has its central place in the novel as a symbol, a metaphor: as O'Reilly explains, perhaps too clearly, Yeats's imagined Byzantium and the Cavern are "all the same project. . . . The thing that's best in people, the thing that wants to be pure and whole and permanent, the thing that won't rest until it builds its eternal bird."

Virtual reality, in other words, is not just the next step in technology; it is the ultimate goal of all technology, of all symbolic thought since the cave paintings. For the first time, "Once out of nature I shall never take / My bodily form from any natural thing" is a genuine possibility; the TeraSys programmers are on the verge of "the fully deformable universe." And so *Plowing the Dark* allows the most complete treatment of the theme that has run through all of Powers's scientific fiction: the dream, or nightmare, of man's total power over nature. A fully deformable universe, after all, can be tragically deformed as well as magically transformed. The title of the novel is another name for the myth of the Sorcerer's Apprentice.

History and its victims kept their hands to the plow, broken, exhausted, like an old married couple trapped for life in love's death lock, unable to break through to that sunlit mutual upland.

The future, under construction, leveraged to the hilt, could only press forward, hooked on its own possibility.

IT is possible that what mankind creates in its moral dark will only make the darkness permanent. Powers explores the threat lurking behind the Cavern's promise in the other half of the novel. (The twinning of stories is another regular feature of his fiction, as though he needs a separate, more nakedly emotional compartment to supplement his fact-crammed main plot.) At first the story of Taimur Martin, in Beirut, half a world away from TeraSys, seems totally unrelated to Adie Klarpol's. Drawing, as he acknowledges, on the accounts of Western hostages in Lebanon, Powers gives a terrifying account of Martin's kidnapping by Islamic guerrillas, which occupies the same five-year span as the TeraSys plot.

Powers describes Martin's physical tortures—he is wrapped head to foot in packing tape, chained to a radiator twenty-four hours a day, fed only scraps and gristle—with meticulous imagination. But the core of this story is psychological—Martin's attempts to make his bare cell into a theater for his mind. And as Martin tries to bring a scene from *Great Expectations*, or the look of his Chicago neighborhood, to life, the link between the two plots becomes clear: he is trying to do unassisted what Adie does with advanced technology. As in the tale of John Henry, if Martin does as well as the machine, it is only at a terrible price.

As the novel progresses, Powers tightens the weave of these two strands, using the loom of politics. He sets *Plowing the Dark* in the years of great upheavals—the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Tiananmen Square massacre, the Gulf War. For Powers, the good in this list is weighed against the evil and found wanting. His fiction has always manifested a rather simple, even naive, hostility toward "politics," which he seems to take as equivalent to violence and ill will in general. (Helen, the artificial-intelligence computer in *Galatea 2.2*, shuts herself down in despair after being confronted with all the horrors in an ordinary newspaper.) Adie talks about the fall of the Berlin Wall with twice-shy hesitation, a lover about to be disappointed again: "What a win. What an astonishing win. . . . It is a win, isn't it?"

In this view, the terrorists who hold Taimur Martin are politics incarnate, mind-

lessly violent in the name of a cause. But the possibility that even Adie's own artistic and intellectual work is at the service of politics doesn't occur to her until late in the novel, when the Gulf War reveals the military applications of virtual reality. This is what may come, Powers suggests, of all that plowing—not the “sunlit mutual upland” of Byzantium, of imagination's total freedom, but the ghostly green night vision of the smart bomb.

Of course, these concerns aren't original to Powers. It is both the achievement of and the problem with his fiction that he seems to reinvent philosophical wheels; he writes about the dehumanizing effects of technology, or the materialist premise that the universe can be fully described by physical laws, seemingly without awareness that many writers have treated them before. But the immediacy of these problems for the novelist makes his novels live. One feels that he has come to them directly through his own encounters with technology—and with poetry; perhaps no living novelist makes more use of poetry, as quotation and as provocation, than Powers.

The other vital element is his prose, also idiosyncratic, stronger in invention than in judgment. Powers rubs language against the grain, constantly agitating it. When he succeeds, he achieves a rare en-

ergy. He perfectly captures the surprise of high political drama: “Event lumbered into sudden view, like some saurian kneecap swinging in front of a tenth-story window.” Or the aging Adie's remorseful vision of herself at twenty-one, “like the Virgin come to taunt Slavic schoolchildren.” Or the speech of a man paralyzed with multiple sclerosis: “The four syllables spread out over so long an astonishment that they lost themselves, like the word ‘Asia’ on a good-sized globe.”

But Powers writes at top volume almost all of the time, and sometimes produces a tinny reverberation, a false note—of melodrama, or caricature, or just repetition. From time to time he inserts static descriptions of the various “rooms” that the Cavern can become—a therapy room, a bedroom from a Van Gogh painting—which are too static, too much like display exercises. New story lines and life histories are introduced halfway through, and a surprise ending joins the twin narratives rather too forcibly. But this profusion of language, characters, and plot seems to be the price of Powers's energy and curiosity. It is a testament to his intelligence and imagination that one pays the price willingly, and in none of his novels is the reward greater than in *Plowing the Dark*. ☞

safety by their Red Cross escorts, who then had great difficulty in preventing their more able charges from running back into the fire to help civilians out. Finally, there is the matter of “Little Miss 1565,” a pretty child, not badly burned, who remains unidentified despite years of detective work and red-herring rumors. Mr. O'Nan's research has been prodigious, and his presentation of his findings is expert.

Baltimore's Mansion

by Wayne Johnston.

Doubleday, 272 pages, \$25.00.

Mr. Johnston is the author of *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, an admirable novel about Newfoundland. His present book is a memoir of his own family's life on the Newfoundland peninsula that Lord Baltimore, back in the seventeenth century, named Avalon. He had never set eyes on the place, and when he did, he left in some haste. His Catholic colonists stayed, and some survived. Mr. Johnston's people were latecomers who joined the hardworking, cash-short society of the place and did well by local standards. Mr. Johnston has an interesting story to tell, and presents it with great skill. He shifts adroitly from past to present, evokes character deftly, describes deadly weather and beautiful scenery and dour wilderness superbly, and reports an explosion of “mummers” on a train with subtle humor. His memoir is frankly nostalgic, for he is one of those recalcitrant Avalonians who lament their country's lapse into a mere province. He is likely to convert most readers to his view.

BRIEF REVIEWS



The Circus Fire

by Stewart O'Nan.

Doubleday, 400 pages, \$24.95.

In spite of wartime manpower shortages and uncertain rail transport, the Greatest Show on Earth rolled into Hartford, Connecticut, on July 5, 1944, and set up for a profitable stand in a traditionally circus-loving town. The weather was that fiercely hot, sticky, lung-clogging sort that afflicts the lower Connecticut Valley in summer, and members of the matinee audience (predominantly women and children) were wearing the least and lightest clothing pos-

sible. When fire hit the big top, the death toll—167—was terrible. Mr. O'Nan's account of the tragedy is gruesome but fascinating. It covers circus methods and lingo, the adventures of survivors, the operation of the disaster-rescue plans that the city had laid to cope with the German attack that never came, the hideous business of identifying the dead, and the subsequent lawsuits. There are many odd episodes and bits of information. When one survivor made it safely home, she was welcomed with five bowls of ice cream. Some convalescents from Bradley Field Station Hospital were quickly whisked to

The Social Lives of Dogs

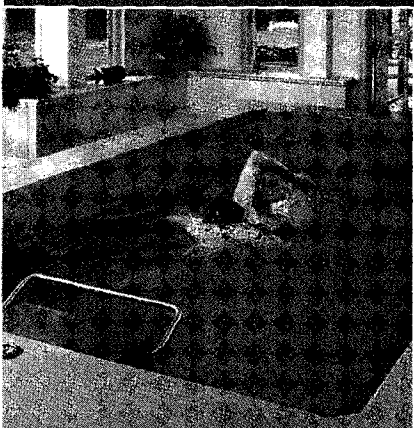
by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas.

Simon & Schuster,

253 pages, \$24.00.

Ms. Thomas does not confine her interest to dogs. Cats and people are included in her multi-species society, all gathered, on one occasion, in her kitchen awaiting their assorted meals. All underfoot, and all hungry. Ms. Thomas has no use for those who condemn anthropomorphism. They are simply ignorant types who do not actually observe animals. She does, and her careful, sympathetic view of their actions and interactions produces consistently engaging anecdotes and recognizable characters. The No. 2 dog worries about her position to the point of neurosis. Rajah, the

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boss cat, is profanely eloquent over an impertinence. Ms. Thomas writes with cool precision, but the emotions, her own and the animals', are there and convincing.

The Secret Lives of Words

by Paul West.

Harcourt, 304 pages, \$24.00.

Mr. West loves words, particularly those with peculiar histories, and he writes about them with irreverent wit and insouciant scholarship. This book is no thesaurus. It is plain fun.

Vikings:

The North Atlantic Saga

edited by William W. Fitzhugh
and Elisabeth I. Ward.

Smithsonian, 432 pages, \$60.00/\$34.95.

It may still be possible to graduate from a respectable school believing that Vikings were murderous seagoing thieves who wore horns on their helmets. It is no longer necessary to wade through ill-provisioned libraries and secondhand-book stores to correct that misconception. A number of authorities have contributed to this fine history of medieval Scandinavia, which covers religion, arts, trade, exploration abroad, and daily life at home. The text extends to later influences on literature and even to amusing trivialities like the Kensington Stone. The illustrations are lavish and well chosen, and the maps are excellent.

Wild Life

by Molly Gloss.

Simon & Schuster, 255 pages,
\$24.00.

The narrator of Ms. Gloss's ultimately ambiguous novel is Charlotte Drummond, a ferocious turn-of-the-century feminist who supports herself and her five sons by writing the sort of novels in which "girl-heroes" lead Indian tribes or demolish dragons with courage, brains, and élan. (Drummond is a great admirer of Jules Verne.) When her housekeeper's small granddaughter goes missing from a lumber camp, Drummond joins the search. Wilderness heroics prove to be decidedly unexpected—so much so that one is entitled to wonder whether hallucination is involved. What is definitely involved is a lively re-creation of life along the Colum-

bia River, with old jokes and historical detail and a memorable heroine. Charlotte Drummond faces the world with a bullwhip tongue, a stiff upper lip, and the assumption of command. That assumption gets modified.

Evening Clouds

by Junzō Shōno,

translated by Wayne P. Lammers.
Stone Bridge Press, 224 pages,
\$12.95.

Mr. Shōno's novel of Japanese family life makes *Little Women* seem downright melodrama by comparison. Events are revealed through the sensibility of Mr. Oura, a literary man given to procrastination. His wife is inclined to small economies, because they started married life with very little money. They have a busy, alarmingly well-organized daughter in high school, a mildly irresponsible son in middle school, and a boy just starting primary school. They live atop a minor mountain on the outskirts of Tokyo, with fine views all around, woods below them, and nothing to worry about but typhoon winds. The book is a collection of seemingly casual vignettes about buying pears or planting shrubbery or evicting centipedes from the attic. Each little episode, however, has its overtones, all of which lead obliquely back to the title. The children are growing up, a housing development is gnawing away at the forest, time and the modern world will submerge their mountain. This is a delicate, sad novel that never admits to sadness.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Recent books by Atlantic authors:

Memoir: *My Life and Themes* by Conor Cruise O'Brien. Cooper Square Press, 460 pages, \$30.00. Conor Cruise O'Brien is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*. Portions of this book first appeared, in somewhat different form, as the magazine's cover story for January 1994 and in July of 1994 and June of 1999.

Everything in This Country Must by Colum McCann. Henry Holt, 150 pages, \$21.00. The title story in this book first appeared in the July, 1998, *Atlantic*.

The Fabric of Hope: An Essay by Glenn Tinder. Scholars Press for Emory University, 227 pages, \$21.95. Glenn Tinder's essay "Can We Be Good Without God?" was *The Atlantic's* cover story for December, 1989.



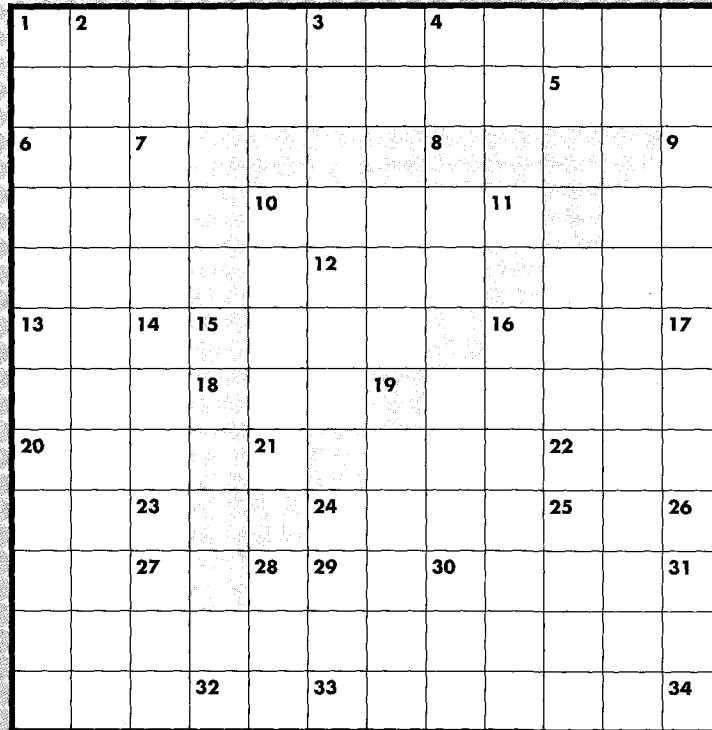
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

TRIA T A AIRT
S N RS IN N S
EG I E R G GE
L ANGL TSEL L

Each clue answer in this puzzle is to be entered with its first letter in the appropriately numbered square and the rest of its letters sequentially forming a right triangle with one horizontal side, one vertical side, and one diagonal side. (Some examples are illustrated above.) The numbered square always represents a corner of a triangle whose first leg proceeds in the compass direction given next to the clue's number; the orientation of the other two legs must be deduced. Letters in the shaded squares form a triangle of their own. Answers include four capitalized words, one of them foreign.

The solution to last month's
Puzzler appears on page 94.



Clues

- | | | | | | |
|-------|---|--------|---|--------|--|
| 1. S | With sides, triangle shapes (6) | 12. N | Gives a lift to crowds around Interstate (6) | 23. S | Shire of Hollywood, after I land in Europe (6) |
| 2. SW | Work with needle and thread, so we hear (3) | 13. SE | Nothing to erase except the ending in a little poem (6) | 24. N | Even characters in <i>Friends</i> will be embarrassed (3) |
| 3. W | Sweet note in the Spanish song (6) | 14. N | Happy with recent times in education (6) | 25. N | I start working for painter (6) |
| 4. E | Wrongly interpret film schedule including <i>Ran</i> (12) | 15. E | Weak spot she found in a cold fish (8,4) | 26. N | "Blue" record being played quite far into the wee hours (12) |
| 5. SW | Sailor returned with a sinking ship's deserter (3) | 16. E | A man's proxies (6) | 27. S | "Tuft" minus a "t" when spelled backwards (6) |
| 6. E | Crook inside would ogle girls (6) | 17. SW | Tough stuff scattered at glacier (9) | 28. E | Rail company mad at Mark (6) |
| 7. NE | Rudimentary vehicle got around California river (2-4) | 18. SW | Edward and I, in getting married and reconciling (9) | 29. SW | Is glum about kid's last scooters (6) |
| 8. N | Mood of part-time employee on <i>E.R.</i> (6) | 19. SE | "Stop," I spoke, and went downhill (12) | 30. SE | American painter's <i>Rabbit in Motion</i> (6) |
| 9. NW | Pop story: "Heartless Tart" (6) | 20. S | Equestrian lassoes a person on the attack (6) | 31. W | Some beaver's eager or reluctant (6) |
| 10. W | Baker roasted nuts for someone enjoying a roll? (12) | 21. N | A large salmon (51 centimeters) is lush? (9) | 32. N | Inane, like a 0-0 score? (9) |
| 11. N | Dire Straits is for people who make fun (9) | 22. SE | Traveling aide, or aide in traveling? (6) | 33. E | Doctor each manuscript in <i>Visions</i> (6) |
| | | | | 34. W | Dine with beer advocate (9) |

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff

I am wondering about the past tense of weedeat—as in “used a weedeater.” Do I say “I weedate the back forty”? One of my friends avoids the problem by calling the device a weedwhacker, thus enabling the past tense to be weedwhacked.

Barbara Tandy
Albany, Calif.

Boy, are you in trouble, Ms. Tandy—not with me but with Frigidaire Home Products, which owns the Weed Eater brand, and also with Sears Craftsman, which owns Weedwacker. These companies are anxious lest their brand names go the way of *aspirin* and *escalator*—erstwhile trademarks that became generic through their owners’ failure to defend them vigorously.

Seriously, though, each of us must decide to what extent to defer to corporate sensibilities in our language. Should we try to avoid using *Xerox* as a verb or as a name for the output of a Canon photocopier? Is it all right to offer a guest a *Kleenex* when Puffs facial tissues are the only brand in the house? Dare we even speak of *weed-eating* or *weed-whacking*?

In all these cases trademarks are being encroached on. It may be that few care except representatives of the relevant corporations and the nation’s copy editors. Copy editors, though, are exactly who prevent generic uses of trademarks from becoming standard, by keeping them out of printed sources. And they do keep them out often enough that in good-quality edited English, generic uses of brand names are the exception, not the rule.

If you’re just talking with your friends and neighbors, certainly feel free to say anything you like: *weed-ate*, *weed-eated*, *Weed Eatered*, whatever. If, though, you find yourself wanting to work a reference to operating your Weed Eater™ or your friend’s Weedwacker™ into something like a speech or a letter to the editor of your newspaper, you’ll seem better attuned to the

complexities of modern life if you follow the advice of the spokesman for Frigidaire whom I consulted. He recommends that you say *trimmed*.

As one whose surname is consistently misspelled, I am perhaps unusually sensitive to this issue: major-league baseball persists in misspelling its players’ Spanish surnames when they include the letter ñ. This baffles me. I e-mailed my local team, whose ñ-deprived player recently hit a grand-slam home run, suggesting that spelling his name with an n was equivalent to spelling Griffey Griphey. Since I received no response, I turn to you as the only institution with the power to compel major-league baseball to add ñ to its alphabet. Should you fail, I will continue to suffer my nightmare of stepping up to the plate with THOMPSON on my back.

Jan Reeves Thomson
Clinton, Wash.

As your fellow baseball fans can no doubt tell from your reference to a grand-slam home run by Raúl Ibáñez, of the Seattle Mariners, you wrote and mailed your letter during last year’s baseball season. Ever since, I’ve been trying on your behalf to stir up some outrage among Hispanic ballplayers. Sorry, but I have had no success.

Though I haven’t been in touch with every major-league player whose name properly includes a tilde, as the diacritical mark in question is called, among those players who did talk to Word

forms, and generally they seemed pleased about that. But tildes rarely appear on scoreboards, and the players didn’t seem particularly displeased about that; they recognize that scoreboards are harder to modify than uniforms. Lynn Lappin, the director of scoreboard operations for the Florida Marlins’ stadium, in Miami, explained that if the stadium wanted to add tildes, “we’d have to change the keyboard mapping of the character generator”—quite a task. She added, “As it is, the character generator often crashes.”

It is true that in Spanish the name Ibáñez, pronounced “Ee-bon-yes,” would be considered misspelled if it didn’t include a tilde, because Spanish treats *n* and *ñ* as separate letters of the alphabet, with distinct pronunciations (the Spanish *n* sounds like the *n*

in “knuckleball,” whereas *ñ* sounds like the *ny* in “nyuk-nyuk”). By insisting on tildes in English contexts, though, aren’t we implicitly calling for characters like ñ and í, to use in other names? Different purveyors of words will answer that question differently. *The Atlantic* in fact uses tildes and rarely the more exotic characters. But if, as you say, in the world at large a name as simple as Thomson is routinely misspelled, then maybe a sports team that seeks out characters beyond the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet is only looking for trouble.

Ultimately, I think we need to shrug and tell ourselves that English is not a phonetic language, and that correctly pronouncing Raúl Ibanez’s name, so spelled, is really no trickier than pronouncing Gil Meche’s. Furthermore, I have to admit that I’m relieved to have found anything related to ethnic identity about which the people in question are not poised to take offense but seem relaxed.

Have you recently had a language dispute that you would like this column to resolve? Write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or send e-mail to MsGrammar@theatlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court.



Court—for instance, Fernando Viña, of the Cardinals, Roger Cedeño, of the Astros, and (through a spokesperson) Magglio Ordóñez, of the White Sox—some do have tildes in their names as these appear on their uni-



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